

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2022 Regular Session
March 29, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Francis C. Thompson, vice chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Barbara W. Carpenter
Representative R. Dewith Carrier
Representative Raymond J. Crews
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Mary DuBuisson
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Brett F. Geymann
Representative Jason Hughes
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.
Representative Timothy P. Kerner
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative C. Denise Marcelle
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Troy D. Romero
Representative Francis C. Thompson, vice chairman
Representative Christopher Turner
Representative Debbie Villio
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dazia Briscoe, committee administrative assistant
Chris Henry, budget analyst
Chas Nichols, budget analyst

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms

III. BUSINESS**Discussion of the FY 22-23 Budget for:****LSU Health Care Services Division**

Mr. Chas Nichols, budget analyst, House Fiscal Division (HFD), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2444, presented an overview and discussed the FY22-23 budget for LSU Health Services Division.

Dr. Wayne Wilbright, chief medical informatics officer, Lalli Kemp Medical Center, 2000 Tulane Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70112, (504) 568-2261, addressed the committee members with highlights of the center including: a critical access hospital that provides acute and ambulatory services to citizens of Tangipahoa Parish and the surrounding region; emergency department in-patient/out-patient, ICU, surgical and ancillary services. The center provides services to all patients independent of their ability to pay or type of insurance. Additionally, the hospital provides health screening and cancer care, manages a drug discount program to patients from the Dept. of Corrections, and provided 20,000 prescriptions to those in the hospital at an average cost of \$8 per prescription and on-site and telemedicine encounters for DOC and parish jail offenders. During COVID -19, in-patient and out-patient services for those requiring non-COVID-19 care was available. Lallie Kemp Medical Center has an economic impact of \$80 million per year.

Mr. Chad Thompson, chief financial officer, Lallie Kemp Medical Center, 52579 Highway 51 South, Independence, LA 70443, (985) 516-6210, was available to answer members' questions.

Representative Wheat and Dr. Wilbright discussed the vital services provided by Lalli Kemp and the report of 87% patient-satisfaction results and 93% willingness to recommend the facility to others. Dr. Wilbright shared that the quality of care improving primary care services, focusing on the institute of healthcare improvements, and employee and patient satisfaction are top priorities for the center.

Representative Crews and Dr. Wilbright discussed performance information on hospital admissions and clinic-visit decline during 2021; the effects of COVID-19 with regard to the facility as well as patients with chronic diseases unable to obtain the services required in a timely manner.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Higher Education

Mr. Chris Henry, budget analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-1394, presented an overview and discussed the FY22-23 budget for Higher Education.

Representative Crews asked Mr. Henry to discuss faculty pay compared to other institutions in the Southern Regional Executive Board, to which Mr. Henry would further investigate.

Representative Hughes and Mr. Henry discussed the change in the funding formula for FY23, with Southern University's percentage not being as high due to more carryforward dollars.

Representative Miller and Mr. Henry discussed federal grant funding in the supplemental appropriations bill.

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, commissioner of higher education, Board of Regents, Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (no phone number provided), addressed the committee on the education shortfalls within the state, whether it be rural or suburban, and the largest reinvestment in 13 years in cradle-to-career executive budget that has been proposed investing in early-childhood learning through higher education. Dr. Hunter Reed spoke of the challenges, natural disasters, and the focus on the strategic plan to keep the higher education students on track. Dr. Reed provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Miller and Dr. Reed discussed the procedure of completing the LOFSA and GOGrant application process.

Dr. Sojuan W. Boutte', executive director, La. Office of Student Financial Aid (LOFSA), 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-7294, explained the GOGrant Program pays a portion of the cost of attendance at an eligible Louisiana institution. Candidacy status institutions must require students to complete FAFSA, and the institution must determine a student's eligibility.

Representative Miller and Dr. Boutte' further discussed eligibility and renewal requirements with GOGrants and Pell Grants. Dr. Boutte' provided a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Crews and Dr. Boutte' discussed cost-of-choice and award amounts to eligible students based on the institution's allocated GO Grant funding their packaging policy.

Dr. William Tate, F. IV, president, LSU, (no address provided) (225) 205-5284, presented LSU's Pentagon of Protection to ensure students' success and to elevate Louisiana for the benefit of all. Dr. Tate discussed the ABC's of the Pentagon: agriculture, biotechnology, coastal region, defense, and energy. Dr. Tate provided a handout, Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Turner and Dr. Tate discussed higher education solving the state's problems and where we currently are with regard to health care. Dr. Tate shared foundational problems and outcomes with health disparities are related to cancer and cancer survivors. LSU desires to invest in creating evidence-based practices with respect to research and the workforce across the state.

Representative Turner and Dr. Tate further discussed improving the science and engineering of agriculture.

Representative Crews and Dr. Tate discussed forensic cybersecurity.

Representative Wheat and Dr. Tate discussed the veterinary school, the role it played in the pandemic, and the research's applicability to saving human life.

Representative Miller thanked Dr. Tate for his work and setting the standards high for the institution.

Representative Lyons thanked Dr. Tate for his leadership and energy.

Representative Bacala and Dr. Tate discussed attracting out-of-state students for LSU, the residential experience, and distance learning to provide an opportunity for those who may be working full time.

Representative Marcelle and Dr. Tate discussed the cybersecurity program and the National Science Foundation.

Representative Romero congratulated Dr. Tate on improving the relationship between the legislature and LSU and the support for agriculture through the state.

Representative Carpenter thanked Dr. Tate and his team for his plans and followed up with America's Seed Fund (National Science Foundation) to expand cyber talent for the state, as well as working with private corporations.

Representative Edmonds and Dr. Tate discussed the Pennington partnership, its most recent ribbon cutting, and where we are as a world leader in obesity treatment and research.

Southern University System

Dr. Ray Belton, president-chancellor, Southern University System, (SUS) 801 Harding Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70813, (225) 771-4680, addressed the committee on allied health programs supporting the health systems in northwest Louisiana. The Baton Rouge campus's Fall 2021 enjoyed robust enrollment for three consecutive years, as it relates to first-year students. Dr. Belton provided a handout, Exhibit D, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Hughes acknowledged Dr. Belton's upcoming retirement and his successful role within the system for the past two decades.

Representative Miller and Dr. Belton discussed the allocation of money for the ravine problem at the Baton Rouge campus. Through a grant awarded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) will receive funds toward this erosion improvement project to preserve Southern University's ravine.

Representative Miller asked for clarification on research extension funding to which Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, chancellor-dean, Ag Research and Extension Center, P.O. Box 10010, Baton Rouge, LA 70813, (225) 771-3269, explained the \$2.5 million match and the confusion it caused.

Representative Miller and Mr. Henry discussed Page 44 of the Higher Education PowerPoint presentation regarding the Health Care Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (H.E.R.O.) Fund.

Representative Turner and Dr. Belton discussed producing additional healthcare workers through the degree programs offered at SUS.

Representative Carpenter thanked Dr. Belton for his service and for having worked under his administration. Representative Carpenter and Dr. Belton discussed the lakes improvements and the erosion project to shore up and secure the land for the Baton Rouge campus. Dr. Belton referred to the master plan from a facilities standpoint and how the university should transform for the next generation of students.

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University of Louisiana System

Dr. Jim Henderson, president and chief executive officer, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-300, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (318) 426-7104, addressed the committee on the nine distinct educational institutions of the communities they serve. President Henderson shared his decision in 2020, with

the commitment of faculty, to go completely online with classes in light of the pandemic. Dr. Henderson provided a handout, Exhibit E, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Wheat and Dr. Henderson discussed the shortage of healthcare workers and initiatives going forward.

Representative Crews and Dr. Henderson discussed the long history of vast investments that have been made in cybersecurity along the northern section of Louisiana, which include governmental, local, and private investments.

Representative McFarland and Dr. Henderson discussed Compete Louisiana, an intervention program designed to help Louisianians with some college credit complete their degree. This program includes a variety of degree options offered through the nine universities that make up the University of Louisiana System.

Representative Turner and Dr. Henderson discussed the possibility of expansion in the UL system for healthcare and healthcare research. Dr. Henderson cited the Edward Via School of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) and this fall enrolling the first cohort of doctors of physical therapy through the University of Louisiana at Monroe, while the DPT program will compliment their doctor of pharmacy program.

Representative Marcelle and Dr. Henderson discussed The Universities of Louisiana Reginald F. Lewis Scholars which enhances the collegiate experience of black male students in the UL System. Specifically, the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars recruit black males and provide educational programs, mentoring opportunities, and co-curricular experiences to improve outcomes.

Louisiana Community and Technical College System

Dr. Monty Sullivan, system president, 265 South Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 922-1643, addressed the committee on updates and higher education in Louisiana. President Sullivan shared information with enrollment, workforce demands, cybersecurity, and broadening the tax base for Louisianians to engage in the economy. Dr. Sullivan also touched upon unemployment and the proper skills necessary to fill the gaps in various industries.

Representative Turner and Dr. Sullivan discussed the hurdles to produce more healthcare workers, which include faculty and the capacity to serve additional students.

Representative Crews and Dr. Sullivan discussed retention and graduation rates with regard to TOPS at four-year institutions (Slide 39 of the Higher Education PowerPoint).

Representative Illg and Dr. Sullivan discussed high school programs that allow students the exposure to one component in education, the area that would blend career and technical education with dual enrollment.

Representative Miller thanked Dr. Sullivan for his efforts with the healthcare system.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Wheat offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 23 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Crews, Deshotel, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Geymann, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Romero, Thompson, Turner, Villio, and Wheat voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue
House Committee on Appropriations