

February 17, 2017

Dr. Joseph C. Rallo  
Commissioner of Higher Education  
Board of Regents  
P.O. Box 3677  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3677

Dear Dr. Rallo:

As Vice Presidents for Research and Economic Development for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Louisiana Tech University, and the University of New Orleans, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to provide constructive input regarding senior staff recommendations for Board consideration in response to Act 619.

We recognize that enhancing economic development in Louisiana and supporting the growth of our current and emerging key employment sectors requires advanced *education* and *innovation* opportunities for our citizens, as established within *Elevate Louisiana*. We further recognize that all three of our universities have an on-going role and obligation in assisting Louisiana to achieve these goals for the higher education system. Historically, UL Lafayette, Louisiana Tech, and UNO have contributed to these goals through the development of strong research doctoral programs resulting in significant economic development, educational, and scholarly outcomes in our regions and throughout the state.

In order that we continue to positively impact the State of Louisiana's education, innovation and economic development goals, we respectfully urge you to consider the following modification to Staff recommendation 3.3.

**Staff Language:**

*“The Board of Regents will complete its statewide program/low-completer review in Spring 2017 and will reevaluate the thresholds in 2018 to assess their appropriateness. There are currently very few “research doctorate” (Ph.D.) programs at institutions outside of LSU A&M, and the Board of Regents will restrict approval of any additional research doctoral programs outside of LSU A&M -- only under exceptional circumstances would the Board consider proposals for research doctoral programs at the statewide institutions. Doctoral programs at regional universities will be restricted to those ‘professional/practice doctorate’ fields.”*

**Proposed Language:**

*“The Board of Regents will complete its statewide program/low-completer review in Spring 2017 and will reevaluate the thresholds in 2018 to assess their appropriateness. The Board of Regents will continue to recognize LSU A&M as a comprehensive doctoral and research university. Statewide institutions contributing to the research and innovation capacity of Louisiana will be authorized to offer research doctoral programs within the framework of *Elevate Louisiana* and areas of focus within their institutional Strategic Plans. The Board of Regents will restrict approval of doctoral programs at regional universities to those ‘professional/practice doctorate’ fields.”*

With this modification, as statewide institutions, we will have the continued ability to impact the state through our research doctoral emphases that are limited and aligned with our designated areas of excellence, thus differentiating us from the state's comprehensive doctoral and research university, LSU A&M College.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration of this request. We stand ready to assist you in further discussions on this topic, and are very appreciative of your tireless efforts to advance higher education in Louisiana.

Sincerely,



Ramesh Kolluru, Ph.D.

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