**MEETING OF THE**

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**DATE:** March 24, 2015

**TIME** Immediately following the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority (LATTA) Meeting

**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 11:05 a.m.

The following members of the Commission were present:

Mr. F. Travis Lavigne, Jr.

Mr. Ken Bradford

Mr. Nichquin Dumas

Mr. Jeffery Ehlinger, Jr

Mr. Walter Guidry, Jr.

Mr. Jimmy Long, Sr

Mr. Michael Murphy

Mr. Wilfred Sibille

Ms. Wendy Simoneaux

Ms. Ann A. Smith

Dr. Larry Tremblay

The following members were absent:

Mr. Scott Ballard

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Mr. Raymond Brandt

Mr. James Garvey

Mr. Willie Hendricks

Mr. Richard Maciasz

Mr. Stephen Toups

Eleven members were present, which did represent a quorum.

The following guests were present:

Ms. Shan Davis

Mr. Melvin Harrison

Ms. Monique King

The following staff members were present:

Dr. Sujuan Boutté

Ms. Rhonda Bridevaux

Ms. Alice Brown

Mr. Kelvin Deloch

Mr. George Eldredge

Ms. Shanna Estay

Ms. Carol Fulco

Mr. Jack Hart

Ms. Denise Jacobs

Ms. Robyn Lively

Mr. Richard Omdal

Ms. Stacy Oubre

Ms. Deborah Paul

Mr. Gus Wales

Dr. Boutté briefed LASFAC members on a letter to the editor from the president of Dillard University with respect to TOPS. Dr. Boutté mentioned the letter generated numerous comments on social media. Dr. Boutté stated the letter with the comments would be sent out to members.

The minutes of the February 19, 2015 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission were presented for review and approval. Mr. Murphy 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, Ms. Jacobs, LA GEAR UP Representative, presented the Field Services report for Intensive Services on behalf of Dr. Tireka Cobb. Ms. Jacobs reported on the LA GEAR UP conference. Ms. Jacobs reported that every student who attended the conference has been accepted to a two or four year college or university. Ms. Jacobs reported that the conference held workshops on topics ranging from careers to campus based life. Ms. Jacobs reported the students feedback from the conference was amazing and wonderful.

Mr. Wales, Director of Public Information and Communication, presented the Field Services report for Statewide and Concentrated services for February 2015. Mr. Wales reported that during the month of February, LOSFA conducted 33 TOPS Seminars with 3,312 students/parents in attendance, 16 General Financial Aid Workshops with 1,575 attendees, one Financial Literacy Program with 20 attendees and 11 FAFSA Programs with 1,274 attendees. Mr. Wales reported that College Goal Sunday was held March 1st along with pre- and post- College Goal Louisiana events. Mr. Wales stated that these events are still going on through the end of March. Mr. Wales reported that business and industry representatives attended several different locations for College Goal Sunday as well as Jump$tart members at four different locations. Mr. Wales reported on the Go Center at the East Baton Rouge Parish Library that served 100 families during the hours of 6 – 9 pm on February 23, 2015. Mr. Wales stated that more Go Center events are being planned across the state. Mr. Wales reported on the Signal Vine text messaging campaign.

Mr. Hart, Assistant Executive Director of Fiscal and Administrative Affairs, presented the financial statements update. Mr. Hart presented the financials for the period ending February 28, 2015. Mr. Hart reported the financial statement for February 2015 showed the Operating Fund closed the month with net assets of $9.2M and the Federal Fund closed with net assets of $7.1M. The Federal Fund had an increase for the month of $22K and a decrease of $83K for the five month period. The reserve ratio was 0.61% on a portfolio of $1.16B. The Operating Fund had a decrease for the month of $244K and $1.6M for the first five months of Federal Fiscal Year 2015. Rehabs were $3.0M for the month; which were 34% below the current projection.

Ms. Paul, Scholarship and Grant Program Director, presented a GO Grant update as of March 19, 2015. Ms. Paul reported the billing deadline is March 24, 2015. Ms. Paul stated that several schools have large outstanding balances, two schools with large balances have submitted bills as of March 24. Ms. Paul reported that GO Grant programming will run on Thursday night and schools have until April 13 to submit any corrections. Ms. Paul reported that the remaining funds after this date will be reallocated to schools who have requested additional funds.

Ms. Paul presented a John R. Justice update as of March 13, 2015. Ms. Paul reported that the application deadline is April 30, 2015 and awards will be made directly to the applicants designated student loan lender. Ms. Paul reported LOSFA is working on the application for the next Federal Fiscal year and LOSFA has not been notified of the amount of money in the program for next Federal Fiscal year. Once the application is approved, the allocation will be determined and the award amount for the 2015-2016 year will be determined.

Mr. Hart presented the TOPS Update. Mr. Hart stated the current billing amount brings us close to being able to pay all the initial spring term bills. Mr. Hart reported all but three spring bills have been paid and one of those is Louisiana Tech Spring Quarter whose 9th day of class is today. Mr. Hart reported when the TOPS projection is updated for this month that LOSFA will include prior year payments in the request. Ms. Paul stated that schools were notified last week that LOSFA only had funding to pay initial spring billings.

Mr. Eldredge reported to the LASFAC members about Financial Disclosure reporting requirements.

Dr. Boutté presented the Executive Director’s update. Dr. Boutté reported on the notification from the United States Department of Education on the cohort default rate for 2012-2013. Dr. Boutté reported in 2016 that the College Goal Sunday grant allocation will be taken over by the National College Access Network (NCAN). Dr. Boutté reported on an update on the Louisiana Connect letters going out to parents. Dr. Boutté reported on slides from the Budget presentation showing funding with State General Fund and without State General Fund. Dr. Boutté reported on the FAFSA Completion Project as of March 2015. Dr. Boutté reported on the Supplemental Course Allocation memorandum of understanding that LOSFA is working with Louisiana Department of Education on.

Mr. Lavigne asked that three items under Committee Reports be approved *in globo*. The first item under Committee Reports was that the Commission receive the approved minutes of the June 2014 Advisory Committee meeting that were adopted at its meeting on September 26, 2014. The second item under Committee Reports was that the Commission receive the approved minutes of the September 2014 Advisory Committee meeting that were adopted at its meeting on December 12, 2014. The third item under Committee Reports was that the Commission receive the approved minutes of the December 2014 Advisory Committee meeting that were adopted at its meeting on March 6, 2015. Mr. Ehlinger made a motion for approval of the three items *in globo*. Ms. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The first item under Old Business was that the Commission consider publication of final rules to amend Sections 301, 501, 503, 505, 507, 701, 703, 705, 801, 803, 1903, 2103 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to change the way the cumulative grade point average is calculated for students with the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors Awards. Mr. Sibille made a motion for approval. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The second item under Old Business was that the Commission consider publication of final rules to amend Sections 113, 301, 502, 703, 803, 1703, 2103, and 2113 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to implement Acts 566, 733, 737, and 837 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Mr. Long made a motion for approval. Mr. Bradford seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The third item under Old Business was that the Commission consider publication of final rules to amend Section 1003 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to add a definition of “Technical or Applied Course” for the TOPS Tech Early Start Award. Mr. Murphy made a motion for approval. Dr. Tremblay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The first item under New Business was that the Commission consider and act upon Requests for Exception to the TOPS 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 of approval of requests from Chantell (59337), Kelsey (606448), Lesley (604765), Jason (617684), Blake (471505), Emily (619270), Amber (556236), Jordan (542094) and Cynetria (420552). Mr. Dumas seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Guidry made a motion to adjourn at 11:53 a.m. and Ms. Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

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Chairman