

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2016 First Extraordinary Session
February 17, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Cameron Henry, Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. in Room 5, in the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Cameron Henry, Chairman
Representative Mark Abraham
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative James K. Armes, III
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Lawrence A. "Larry" Bagley
Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.
Representative Charles R. Chaney
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Franklin J. Foil, Vice Chairman
Representative Lance Harris
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Walt Leger, III
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Steve E. Pylant
Representative Jerome Richard
Representative John M. Schroder, Sr.
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Scott M. Simon

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Penny B. Bouquet, Administrative Secretary
Mr. Peter G. E. Conroy, Legislative Analyst
Ms. Nancy Keaton, Legislative Analyst

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Ms. Faye Talbot, Sergeant at Arms
Ms. Vivian Hurst, Sergeant at Arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Higher Education

Mr. Daniel Waguespack, Budget Analyst for the House Fiscal Division, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-7477, gave an overview of the FY15-16 and FY16-17 budgets for Higher Education.

Dr. Sujuan Boutté, Executive Director of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-7295 gave an overview of the FY15-16 and FY16-17 budgets for LOSFA. (See Exhibit A)

Dr. Joseph C. Rallo, Commissioner of Higher Education, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 6-200, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4253, gave an introduction and overview of the FY15-16 and FY16-17 budgets for the Board of Regents and each of the four systems of Higher Education in Louisiana. (See Exhibit B)

Dr. Dan D. Reneau, Jr., Interim President of the University of Louisiana System, 1201 North Third Street, 7-300, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6950, and Dr. Rallo, discussed unfunded mandated costs and discussed the Governor's plan for a 50/50 split between college tuition fees and state aid.

Dr. F. King Alexander, President of the Louisiana State University (LSU) System, 3810 West Lakeshore Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 578-2111, addressed the committee regarding the breakdown and history of mandated costs for the LSU System.

Dr. Alexander and Dr. Rallo discussed the effect of unilateral autonomy over mandated costs on the Higher Education systems' budgets, the correlation between the number of colleges and universities in Florida versus Louisiana, the importance of the state's professional schools and agriculture centers, the retention rate of the state's professional schools, and gave an explanation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements for accreditation and the ramifications of losing accreditation.

Dr. Ray L. Belton, President of the Southern University System, P.O. Box 9374, Baton Rouge, LA 70813, (225) 771-5020, discussed the impact of the Southern University System losing accreditation.

Dr. Monty Sullivan, President of Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), 265 South Foster Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 992-2800, discussed, with Representative Leger, the impact of budget reductions on LCTCS and how that relates to Louisiana's industry and workforce.

Mr. Jay Dardenne, Commissioner of Administration, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-210, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7000, discussed, with Representative Leger, the incentives given to corporations operating in Louisiana and how those incentives compare to other states across the nation.

Mr. Terrence Ginn, Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Administration for the Board of Regents, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 6-200, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-4253, and Dr. Alexander discussed additional funding for specialized institutions in Louisiana and the impact it would have on those institutions if additional funding is not realized.

Dr. Rallo discussed the cost savings associated with merging certain universities in Louisiana with Representative Richard.

Dr. Alexander and Dr. Rallo discussed tuition autonomy for universities and how Louisiana compares to the Southern average in tuition and fees versus federal funding.

The meeting recessed at 12:37 p.m. and reconvened at 1:35 p.m.

Dr. Sullivan gave an overview of the FY15-16 budget and discussed the impact a budget reduction will have on LCTCS.

Dr. Belton gave an overview of the FY15-16 budget and discussed the impact a budget reduction will have on the Southern University system.

Dr. Alexander gave an overview of the FY15-16 budget and discussed the impact a budget reduction will have on the LSU Ssystem.

Dr. Reneau addressed the committee to discuss what impact budget reductions have made on Higher Education.

Commissioner Dardenne addressed the committee regarding the dollar figure Higher Education would need to sustain through FY15-16.

Representative Schroder addressed the committee about consolidating and restructuring Higher Education.

Dr. Sullivan discussed how LCTCS has sustained through admissions increases and budget reductions, the student population in LCTCS, and the mergers that took place within the system.

Dr. Alexander discussed the LSU faculty salaries, with Representative Amedée, and explained that LSU athletics is all self-generated funds.

Dr. Rallo discussed different efficiency scenarios in Higher Education with Representative Smith.

Mr. Darryl Purpera, Legislative Auditor, P.O. Box 94397, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 339-3800, explained the audit process and the fees associated with an audit to the committee.

Commissioner Dardenne gave an explanation concerning how the budget is balanced each fiscal year and how the budget reductions are proportionate to the revenue generated within the state.

Dr. Alexander, Dr. Belton, Dr. Rallo and Dr. Sullivan discussed, with Representative Edmonds, recommendations that the Board of Regents and the university systems are trying to implement to reduce duplicity and become more efficient within Higher Education.

Dr. Alexander and Dr. Rallo discussed, with Representative Abraham, the Southern average of cost per student versus Louisiana university's cost per student.

Dr. Alexander and Dr. Belton discussed, with Representative Bagley, the profitability of their class offerings for their respective systems.

Dr. Alexander, Dr. Rallo, and Dr. Sullivan discussed, with Representative Bagley, ideas to reduce the cost of textbook purchases.

Department of Children and Family Services

Mr. Blake Ruiz, Budget Analyst for the House Fiscal Division, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-7477, gave an overview of the FY15-16 and FY16-17 budgets for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Ms. Marketa Garner Walters, Secretary for DCFS, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7475, gave introductory remarks and an overview of the FY15-16 and FY16-17 budgets for DCFS. She also discussed, with Representative Henry, public/private partnerships for foster care.

Ms. Etta Harris, Deputy Undersecretary for DCFS, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7475, discussed, with Representative Smith, how funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program are distributed.

Ms. Harris and Ms. Walters discussed, with Representative Schroder, the audit findings of DCFS.

Commissioner Dardenne discussed the \$10.9 million supplemental budget request for DCFS with Representative Schroder, and explained why it is not part of the Governor's budget reduction plan.

Ms. Walters explains the Child Protective Services investigation process and how DCFS works with local law enforcement on child abuse and neglect cases.

Dr. Rhenda Hodnett, Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7475, discussed the outreach efforts made to local faith based organizations to help fund DCFS' programs with Representative Bagley.

Mr. Sammy Guillory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Family Support, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7475, discussed the audit findings within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with Representative Bacala, and explained how the department will address those findings.

Mr. Guillory gave an explanation of the eligibility requirements, including the new implemented work requirement, for SNAP benefits.

Ms. Lisa Andry, Executive Director of Child Support Enforcement, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7475, discussed child support collections with Representative Bacala.

Mr. Joe Harrison, 5642 Highway 11, Napoleonville, LA, 70390, (985) 665-9000, and Mr. Shawn P. Harrison, 400 Hale Drive, Thibodaux, LA 70301, (337) 258-8754, provided testimony on behalf of Blessed by Downs, a non-profit organization who serves Assumption, LaFourche, and Terrebonne parishes, and the surrounding areas.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Cameron Henry
House Committee on Appropriations