

Week of October 4

The Louisiana Board of Regents is leading an effort to develop goals for the higher education system. This week, they released to the management boards a draft of the work to date. The goals are listed under two focus areas, “Educate” and “Innovate.”

Metrics under Educate include:

- Number and percent of degrees/certificates conferred in high demand fields (Star 4 & 5)
- Number and percent of students who earn a credential/degree from a 4-year and started at a 2-year
- Number and percent of adult population (25+) completing a certificate or degree
- Number and percent of graduating class who are minority or low-income
- Number and percent of high school graduates enrolled in post-secondary institutions (within 2 fall semesters)
- Average salary of graduates in Louisiana 2 and 6 quarters and 5 years after graduation
- Wage earnings of graduates by program
- Increase in total taxable income across Louisiana

Metrics under Innovate include:

- Number and percent of students involved in undergraduate and graduate research in strategic research areas
- Number of grant proposals, conference presentations, publications by faculty in strategic research areas
- Increase in the level of total research expenditures (with national comparisons)
- Number of license agreements signed to commercialized inventions by Louisiana students/faculty
- Number of invention disclosures received
- Number of patent applications filed
- Number of start-up companies formed
- Research expenditures per FTE faculty

I have no problem with most of the metrics. If the higher education enterprise helps move the needle in these areas, we will have a better state in which to live. Of course, the list of policy and practice changes necessary to achieve significant progress on these measures is long.

First and foremost, the state must decide higher education is a priority and acknowledge we will never reach our potential until we invest funding at a level reflective of that priority. If \$1.2 billion dollars in state funding were distributed to colleges and universities in accordance with the formula used just this year, we would advance community, state, and human well being further and faster than at any time in Louisiana history. To put that number in perspective, Louisiana collects approximately \$16 billion in state taxes and redistributes \$7 billion of those revenues in the form of tax credits. It is not a big ask.

As for our work, the Thanksgiving break is but six weeks away. Every interaction we have with a current or potential student, employer, or community member (or with each other, for that matter) over these weeks is a moment of truth that could advance our university and our mission. I am so grateful for your efforts over these past several months. It shows, and it sure makes going to work everyday fun.

The Week

Monday and Tuesday of this week, I was in Indianapolis for a Presidential Roundtable of low resource institutions and historically black institutions at NCAA headquarters. Our very own Greg Burke has chaired a committee examining the work of the Accelerating Academic Success Program. The program has resulted in significantly improved outcomes for student athletes at institutions that have traditionally struggled due primarily to resource-related challenges. Greg's group presented a thorough analysis of the success of the program and made sound recommendations for the future of the program that provide a good balance of resource carrots and accountability sticks.

Wednesday morning, Dr. Bezoari dropped by for a conversation about our strategic planning process. As we continue to implement the strategic framework developed this summer, we will need to start thinking about a long-range plan that will build on the success of the framework. I asked Mass for input on ensuring the planning process is faculty led and results in

an actionable plan that stretches us beyond what we might think is possible today. Please stay tuned...

Later Wednesday, I received a welcome call from our partners at the Education Advisory Board. We will be participating in forums related to enrollment management and effective electronic and continuing education.

Wednesday afternoon, Natchitoches Chamber President Tony Davis and Natchitoches Community Alliance member Mike Wolff visited with Darlene Williams and me on a number of economic development items.

Wednesday evening, Tonia and I attended a wonderful dinner for our senior football players at the beautiful home of NSU alum Carroll Long and his wife Susan. The dinner was co-hosted by Senator Gerald and Rose Long. This class of athletes is an impressive group with a bright future far beyond the football field.

Thursday, the College of Business & Technology hosted the 49th annual Walter Porter Forum. A panel of Ted Jones, Joe Dowley, and Congressman Billy Tauzin presented to a large audience of students and faculty from the college on the topic of business ethics. Congressman Tauzin chaired the committee that investigated the Enron debacle. I cannot remember a more compelling event of this type. Congratulations and thank you to Ted Jones, Margaret Kilcoyne, and Carmella Parker for coordinating and delivering the forum.

Thursday night, I was delighted to visit with Greg Granger and author (and Greg's cousin) Gary Lavergne at our Constitution Day lecture. Mr. Lavergne spoke on voting rights in a presentation entitled "The Greatest One: Thurgood Marshall and the Destruction of the Texas White Primary."

Friday morning, we welcomed the leadership team from Alliance Compressor to campus for their strategic retreat. NSU Alum Ken Gardner and team are tremendous supporters of our university and employers of our graduates. I was honored to speak with them briefly about how top management teams impact organizational culture.

Later Friday, I traveled to our Leesville/Fort Polk campus for a visit. Martha Koury and Denise Jackson joined me for a conversation with Fort Polk Progress leader Mike Reese. Afterwards, I visited with Martha's UNIV1000

class. We talked about efforts by the university to strengthen offerings in the Leesville area, support the Fort Polk community, and ensure a world-class student experience. The students offered a number of suggestions related to the availability of student services and expanded class offerings.

On Saturday, after an afternoon Lady Demon volleyball match (folks, ignore the current record and support these women; they are a fun group to watch!), Tonia and I enjoyed a great evening of Mint Julips at Cherokee Plantation with Tommy Whitehead and other community members. The home (built in 1837) is opened but once a year, and is truly a Natchitoches/Cane River treasure.

Please contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns.