



NCHEMS

A Study of the
Governance Structure of the Louisiana
Community and Technical College
System (LCTCS)

In Response to Senate Concurrent
Resolution No. 163 of the 2004 Regular Session of
the Louisiana State Legislature

Submitted to the
Louisiana Board of Regents

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 163 of the 2004 Regular Session of the Louisiana State Legislature

Study purposes and methodology

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 163 adopted in the 2004 Regular Session of the Louisiana State Legislature urged and requested that the Board of Regents study the feasibility of creating two separate systems out of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). The resolution includes the following rationale for the study:

- A. Since the creation of the postsecondary education system and its management board comprised of the community and technical colleges, the union has produced many detractors.
- B. Numerous complaints have been raised as to the efficiency and manageability of the system as currently configured.
- C. The Louisiana Constitution provided that the Board of Regents shall make written findings and recommendations to the legislature within one year from the receipt of a request from the legislature prior to the creation or merger or transfer of institutions of higher learning from one board to another.

The Board of Regents (BOR) requested the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to undertake a study in response to this resolution. In undertaking this study, NCHEMS:

- Reviewed background materials about the technical college campuses, the creation of LCTCS in 1998, and the development of both LCTCS and Louisiana Technical College (LTC) since 1998.
- Reviewed data regarding the needs of each region of Louisiana.
- Drew upon NCHEMS' previous work in several regions of Louisiana, including the analysis of employer needs and the need for community college and workforce development services.
- Reviewed the findings and recommendations from the Report of the Adult Learning Task Force of January 26, 2005, and the preliminary findings of other initiatives including the Governor's Workforce Competitiveness Task Force and Workforce Enterprise Team, and the High School Redesign Commission.
- Interviewed a cross section of individuals (see Appendix).
- Placed the alternatives for the LTC in light of the education and workforce development needs of Louisiana and the experiences of other states.

Background of LCTCS

The establishment of LCTCS evolved from several concerns:

- The need to improve the quality and competitiveness of the state's adult workforce.
- The lack of capacity to address the needs of students who are not focused on earning a baccalaureate degree but need postsecondary education to succeed in the labor market.
- The unplanned and uncoordinated development of community colleges, often without consideration of potential duplication of existing capacity in the technical colleges and the need for efficient use of existing resources.
- The need to improve the quality of the state's technical colleges and their responsiveness to changing workforce needs, especially the need to move the colleges from training students primarily for low-skill jobs at a time when the developing economy increasingly needed a "high-skilled" workforce.
- The need to strengthen the oversight as well as statewide and regional coordination of both the technical colleges and community colleges within the framework of overall state policy for postsecondary education.
- The limited capacity of BESE and the Department of Education for oversight of institutions that were increasingly offering postsecondary training.
- The need for the technical colleges to be "at the table" with the community colleges in the competition for state resources.

Several reports in the early 1990s, including a study by the Board of Regents and a report from the state association of technical institute directors, urged changes in the governance of technical colleges and community colleges.ⁱ The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana (PAR), in a 1997 report on "the community college system," noted that "... the current community college expansion is occurring piecemeal with no overall plan or objectives. Campuses are being authorized, even where the Board of Regents has issued negative feasibility reports." The report noted that in the 1997 legislature alone three new community colleges had been authorized as well as numerous other isolated initiatives aimed at expanding community college services throughout the state.ⁱⁱ

In early 1998, the Governor's Task Force on Technical and Community Colleges and Adult Education recommended that Louisiana establish a statewide system of technical and community colleges.ⁱⁱⁱ The task force argued that the restructuring was necessary to give Louisiana a system with the authority, responsibility, and resources to prepare, educate, and maintain an internationally competitive workforce for Louisiana, and to give Louisiana a seamless educational system that spans pre-K and K-12 to higher education and adult workforce education and lifelong learning. The system's broad goals were to be:

- Make workforce development its top priority.
- Support economic development and respond to the needs of business and industry.
- Provide students an openly accessible and customer friendly system of education and training.
- Support a seamless educational system.
- Provide for strategic management, operation, and for system and institutional accountability.
- Create an adequate and performance-based funding system.

The debate culminated in ACT 141 and ACT 170 enacted during the First Extraordinary Session of 1998. The voters then approved a Constitutional amendment establishing a new management board, the Board of Supervisors for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. The legislation transferred to the board:

- The 42 technical colleges previously under the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).
- Five community colleges previously under the Board of Supervisors of the University of Louisiana (Bossier Parish Community College, Delgado Community College, Elaine P. Nunez Community College, River Parishes Community College, and South Louisiana Community College).
- Baton Rouge Community College, previously created by the state's desegregation settlement agreement and previously under the Louisiana State University-Southern University Joint Management Board.

In 1999, Louisiana Delta Community College in Monroe was established and subsequently, Sowela and LE. Fletcher evolved from technical college campuses to technical community colleges.

Organization of LTC

In the debate leading up to the 1998 legislation, the technical colleges and others repeatedly expressed concerns that the new structure might place too much emphasis on the “academic” mission of community colleges and give lower priority to vocational-technical education, especially those programs in the skilled trades that focus primarily on preparing individuals for immediate employment rather than further education and transfer to an academic institution. In part because of these concerns, provisions were added to the legislation to specify that the new system would have two divisions, a vocational-technical division and a community college division. The Constitutional provisions state the following:

The system shall include all programs of public postsecondary vocational-technical training, and, as provided by law, institutions of higher education which offer associate degrees but not baccalaureate degrees and such programs and institutions shall be supervised and managed by the board. The system shall be comprised of two divisions, the vocational-technical division which shall include all public postsecondary vocational-technical schools and the community college division which shall include the community colleges in the system (§7.1.(A) Constitution of the State of Louisiana)

The division for vocational-technical training is currently organized as a single “college” with 40 campuses and several extension campuses (including prisons). The LTC is headed by a chancellor who reports directly to the LCTCS president. At the level of the system, LTC is identified as a single institution parallel to the seven community colleges and two technical community colleges. The LTC campuses are organized within the structure of seven districts each headed by a vice chancellor. In two districts (District 2 and District 8), the vice chancellor also serves as campus administrator. The district units function as decentralized units of the central LTC office providing primarily coordination and support services to the LTC units within the district. The campus deans of the technical college campuses report to the chancellor through the vice chancellor. Original conception of LTC as a single college with single accreditation was not feasible—or acceptable to the accrediting bodies. The Council on Occupational Education (COE) now accredits each campus separately.

State funding for the LTC is appropriated to the LTC as a single institution. The LTC then allocates funding to each campus according to a formula. Initially, budget authority for each campus rested at the campus level, but that authority was subsequently transferred to the district level. Campus financial management decisions are now subject to approval by the vice chancellors at the district level.

Observations and findings

Issues identified in interviews and analysis

Among those interviewed for this study who are from outside the formal state-level structure of the BOR, LCTCS and LTC, the prevailing view can be summarized in this quotation:

I am not for blowing the whole system up, but obviously something is not working. Unless something is done to address the problems, political momentum will grow to make changes and something will happen that we all may regret.

Not all those interviewed would agree on what problems need to be solved, however. These can be grouped roughly as follows:

- A. Issues related to the mission of the LTC and its relationship to the capacity of Louisiana to provide community and technical college services in every region of the state to meet the changing needs of the state's population and economy.
- B. The perceived mismatch between state and system policy and procedures, on one hand, and the LTC mission on the other. Policies and procedures encompass a full range of areas (academic, human resources, financing and governance). The issues relate to policies and procedures at every level of the system: state statute, the Department of Education, the Board of Regents, the LCTCS system, LTC, and within the LTC at the district level and individual campuses.
- C. Problems of leadership, management, implementation, and communications at each level of the system.
- D. Resistance to change, especially from those who have lost the power and authority that may have had under the previous system.

Some suggested that the principal problems were in last category: resistance to change from disgruntled leaders of the previous system who insist on by-passing the system and taking their issues directly to their local legislators. This is clearly a problem, but we conclude that it would be a serious mistake to attribute all the problems to this one area. Serious challenges remain in:

- Defining the kinds of community and technical college services needed in every region of Louisiana.
- Resolving the ambiguities of the LTC mission.
- Aligning key policies of finance and governance with that mission.
- Developing effective regional leadership and coordination of community and technical college services.

Given the scope of the study, we could not address all the detailed issues raised in the interviews about specific policies and procedures or about specific issues of leadership, management, implementation, and communications problems. Our sense is that the LCTCS and LTC leadership has a sound grasp of most of the issues and is making significant, step-by-step progress in resolving many of the issues such as those identified in the meeting on May 13, 2004, between the LTC Statewide Leadership Team and concerned legislators.

Community and technical college services

Louisiana has made progress since 1998, but the challenges that prompted the restructuring legislation remain. The Governor's Adult Learning Task Force, testimony before the Governor's Task Force on Workforce Competitiveness, and surveys from the Council for a Better Louisiana, all point to low level of education attainment as a major barrier to the state's ability to expand existing businesses or attract new industries. Frequently cited are:

- Failure of many students to move through the education pipeline to complete high school and enter postsecondary and obtain a postsecondary certificate or degree.
- Low levels of adult literacy and a workforce that is significantly under-prepared for a high wage/high skill economy.
- Inability of employers to find skilled workers to fill available jobs.
- Fragmented, uncoordinated capacity to meet the educational and workforce development needs in each region of the state.

The nature of these issues varies significantly among the state's regions, each of which has a distinctive culture and economy. For this reason, it is essential for Louisiana to pursue a regional approach to improving the knowledge and skills of the population and workforce.

Whether the LTC remains within the LCTCS structure or is separated, Louisiana must ensure that certain basic services are delivered in each region in order to address the challenges summarized above. For the purpose of examining the implications of separating the LTC from LCTCS, it is important to focus on the *services* needed by different client groups in each region instead of on the specific institutional structure within which these services are provided. These services include:

- Remedial and development education and adult learning services (e.g., basic workplace skills).
- General education: Developing competencies required for further education and employment, including not only competence in specific areas such as mathematics, reading, or written and oral communication, but also transferable skills required for both further education and employment such as those assessed through ACT WorkKeys. For example, employers are interested in employees' ability to read for gathering information and analyzing problems, to apply mathematics and use applied quantitative reasoning (not simply to solve mathematical problems), to write for business purposes, to locate information, to observe and listen in order to learn and adapt to rapidly changing demands, and above all, in the ability to work in teams.
- Transfer preparation: Ensuring that students complete coursework and gain competencies necessary for transfer to the next education level with the minimum loss of time and added cost, including the next level of a career ladder (for example, from practical nursing to registered nurse) or to upper division majors at a university.
- Career preparation: Ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills and competencies for specific occupations, including a certificate (and often, industry based certification), an associate degree in applied science or a transferable associate degree.
- Customized training, rapid response workforce development.

- Community service (non-credit courses and other services to the community).
- Brokering and serving as the delivery site for other providers: A key mission of technical or community colleges in other states is to serve as the venue for the delivery of programs to a region by other institutions. For example, technical college campuses can serve as the delivery site within a region to ensure that the region's population has access to community college or university programs offered by another institution.

Figure A displays the services required to meet regional educational and workforce development needs of four different client groups:

- In-school youth (secondary education students)
- Recent high school graduates
- Adults
- Employers

Figure A. Community and Technical College Services

Primary Client Groups							
	Remedial and developmental education and adult education	General education	Transfer preparation	Career preparation	Customized training, rapid-response workforce development	Community service (non-credit courses and other services to the community)	Brokering and serving as a delivery site for other providers
In-school youth (secondary education)	CC, LTC, K12 and Other Adult Education Providers	CC (Dual Enrollment)	CC (Dual Enrollment)	CC, LTC (Dual Enrollment)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Recent high school graduates	CC, LTC	CC	CC	CC, LTC	CC, LTC, and Other Providers	CC	CC, LTC
Adults	CC, LTC, K12 and Other Adult Education Providers	CC	CC	CC, LTC	CC, LTC, and Other Providers	CC	CC, LTC
Employers	N/A	N/A	N/A	CC, LTC, and Other Providers	CC, LTC, and Other Providers	N/A	CC, TC

Note: CC=Community Colleges, LTC=Louisiana Technical College.

Shared responsibility for community and technical college services

Most states provide these services within the institutional framework of comprehensive community colleges, but some states provide the services through several different institutions serving a single region through a coordinated regional strategy. In Louisiana, however, the provision of these services is a shared responsibility of the LCTCS community colleges and the LTC, as well as LSU-Eunice and SU-Shreveport, and to a more limited (and decreasing extent), universities. Figure A illustrates these shared responsibilities according to service and client groups.

Technical and industrial versus “academic” postsecondary

One argument to separate the LTC from the LCTCS is that such a move is essential to guard the LTC mission from the postsecondary “academic” focus of both the LCTCS and the Board of Regents. The concern of some is that the historic role of the LTC to provide traditional vocational-technical training, especially in skilled trades such as welding, is being undermined by an emphasis on the postsecondary “academic” mission of the

community colleges. As illustrated in Figure A, however, the distinction in role, mission, and client groups between community colleges and the LTC is far more blurred than commonly perceived and because of demands from employers and students, the roles will increasingly converge.

- A. The principal overlap in mission between the community colleges, technical community colleges, and the LTC (see shaded cells in Figure A) occurs in the functions of career/occupational preparation and customized training and workforce development. Both the community colleges and the LTC provide career preparation programs, but the LTC offers programs primarily in the skilled trades and at the technical certificate and degree levels (AAS), whereas the community colleges offer programs leading to certificates (industry-based certification) and transfer-level (AS) professional/technical programs.
- B. Expectations of students and employers are leading to a degree of convergence in missions. Employers are demanding significantly higher levels of basic skills in mathematics (quantitative reasoning), problem-solving, and communications—even in skilled trades such as welding—that was the case a decade ago. Some sectors of Louisiana’s economy continue to depend on low-wage, low-skill employment, but the expectations regarding employees’ knowledge and skills are increasing rapidly. These demands are requiring the technical college campuses to increase the general education content in their curricula.
 - Students who attend technical college campuses for job training for immediate employment or up-grading of job-specific skills also recognize that expectations of employers for basic skills are increasing. They also will need basic skills in order to be able to advance in their careers (e.g., move from certified nurse assistant, to licensed practical nurse, to registered nurse). After a period of employment, many will want to continue their education and training toward a higher level of industry-based certification, an associate or higher degree in areas such as mathematics and communications. Students want to be able to have the general education necessary to move seamlessly between education and training providers at different stages of their careers.
 - Employers and communities are looking to community colleges to respond to regional workforce development needs. Core dimensions of these institutions are the provision of career/occupational programs (including both industry-based certification and degree programs) and rapid-response workforce development.
- C. A common misperception of the LTC is that its core mission is to provide training in traditional technical and industrial courses and skilled trades (construction trades, mechanics and repairers, precision production trades (e.g., welding). An

analysis of headcount enrollments and credentials (certificates and applied associate degrees) awarded by the LTC, however, reveals a different picture¹:

- Most students at LTC campuses (ranging from 40% to over 70% on a few campuses) are enrolled in programs to prepare for occupations that require a solid general education foundation both for immediate employment and for further advancement in the field, including: health professions such as licensed practical nurse, computer and information sciences, and business management (accounting, etc.).
- More than half of the certificates and applied associate degrees granted by the LTC in 2002-2003 were for occupations that require a strong general education foundation:
 - Short-term (less than one year) training: 53.4% in health fields, compared to only 19.0 in precision production (e.g., welding), 8% for mechanics and repairers, and 1.7% for construction trades.
 - One-to-two year training: 42.3% in health fields (e.g., licensed practical nurse), compared to 10.4% in precision production, 8.3% for mechanics and repairers, and 1.7% in construction trades.

D. Employers interviewed in NCHEMS' needs analyses frequently cited LTC programs in fields such as industrial maintenance technology and industrial electronics technology as among the strongest and most valuable in training individuals to undertake high-level technical assignments in process control, maintenance, and other functions in large industrial and manufacturing operations. These are fields that require high levels of competence in mathematics and problem-solving.

E. Occupations in precision production, mechanics and repairers and construction trades now require far higher levels of basic and workplace skills than in the past in order to be able to adjust to rapidly changing tasks and to comply with health and safety requirements.

All programs taught at the LTC require students to have some level of general education and basic workplace skills—communications (reading and writing), computation, problem solving, etc. There is little disagreement on this basic requirement. Nevertheless, there are deeply felt disagreements about **how** these skills should be taught—in stand-alone “academic” courses or as part of the vocational program itself (imbedded instruction).

A. The differences and conflicts between two accrediting agencies, the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) complicate the situation. COE accredits the LTC and SACS

¹ These data exclude the large program for marine operators at Young Memorial. This one program constitutes 10% of the headcount enrollment and almost 50% of all certificates granted for less-than one-year training for the whole LTC.

accredits the community colleges and universities. If a student wishes to transfer from the LTC to a SACS-accredited institution, SACS standards require that all credits transferred be for distinct courses taught by faculty members who meet SACS qualifications. Except if a student can demonstrate that he or she has learned the required knowledge and skills through an assessment such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), general education gained through “imbedded” instruction cannot be transferred to meet the general education requirements of a SACS-accredited college or university. This divide between COE and SACS works to the severe disadvantage of students since it stands in the way of seamless transfer of coursework from LTC to community colleges and on to four-year institutions. The LTC is pursuing solutions to this problem by adding specific general education courses to the LTC curricula and increasing the qualifications of faculty teaching these courses—preferably to the levels required to meet SACS standards. Having the community colleges deliver general education on the LTC campuses is also an alternative. In some cases, however, the addition of these general education courses detracts from the time in the curriculum devoted to teaching essential technical skills (e.g., the number of hours teaching welding is reduced to provide room for general education courses). Also, the “imbedded” instruction in terms of developing skills for practical application can be stronger and more relevant than a separate course.

B. From NCHEMS’ perspective, it is important that LTC as well as LCTCS and Board of Regents policies recognize and support the continuation of “imbedded” general education in the curricula for some of the LTC programs. The ultimate resolution to this dilemma is to move away from “courses” as the “coin of the realm” and instead focus on demonstration of competence. This path is being investigated seriously by BOR and LCTCS staff with an eye to using elements of ACT WorkKeys as devices for assessing:

- Readiness for college-level work—especially for individuals who have not obtained a high school diploma or GED.
- Attainment of competence in college-level skills courses (math, etc.).
- Competencies required for specific occupations.

These investigations are strongly encouraged.

Another source of tension between the traditional LTC mission and the “postsecondary” emphasis of the LCTCS stems from moving the LTC from a traditional “open enrollment” calendar to an academic year calendar, and the change from “clock hours” to “semester credit hours” as the basis for student accounting and the allocation of funding. In the past, students were able to enter LTC courses (in welding, for example) at any time in the year and pursue an individualized program leading to a certificate within a specified number of clock hours. In addition, training programs were organized on a “block” schedule basis, meaning for example, that a student would attend a welding course Monday through Friday from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon. Rather than attend separate courses in general education subjects, most of the general education

curriculum was “imbedded” in the technical curriculum. When the technical colleges were transferred to the new LCTCS, the calendar and student academic accounting were changed to a postsecondary model in which instruction was organized in “courses” through which students earned a specified number of credit hours. The academic calendar was changed to a nine-month, two semester academic calendar. Training programs were reorganized from the block “clock hour” format to “courses” or modules offered in a traditional academic calendar (e.g., Monday, Wednesday and Friday for a course in X, Tuesday and Thursday for a course in Y). Instead of allowing students to enter training programs on an “open-enrollment” basis throughout the year, they were required to enter training programs at the beginning of a semester. The linking of enrollment reporting and funding to the new calendar and course structure put pressure on the technical college campuses to make the transition. Campuses were required to report student numbers in terms of full-time equivalent students defined in terms of the number of credit hours. The number of full-time equivalent students at a campus was then used to determine the level of funding available for a campus.

At the time of transfer of the LTC to LCTCS, no data system was in place for accurate information on enrollments and there was no effective, rational basis for resource allocation. It was therefore necessary for the BOR and LCTCS to act quickly to put data systems in place and establish a funding policy. It is clear, however, that the application of academic calendars and student accounting definitions from a traditional academic model and the link of these new methodologies with funding ran counter to some of the important, valuable modes of delivering technical and trade programs and workforce training. The most developed community and technical colleges in other states deliberately support the two missions of providing strong technical and trade programs as well as providing academic programs, but they do so by aligning policies (calendars, course structures, student accounting, and resource allocation) with these two missions. In Louisiana, it is important that the BOR and LCTCS ensure that these policies also support these different missions.

LTC structure and delivery of community and technical college services

As described above, the LTC is organized as a single statewide college. The individual LTC campuses are then organized within seven districts each headed by a vice chancellor. The organization of LTC as a single statewide college (even though each campus is accredited separately) was a decision made by the LCTCS and not by statute.

The district structure of LTC is one of the most contentious aspects of the LTC. The organization of the LTC into seven districts was a reasonable and practical means to narrow the span of control from an unmanageable system of 40 campus deans reporting to the chancellor, to a system of several campus deans report to district vice chancellors. In theory, the district structure makes sense as a means to decentralize services, promote links with regional economic and workforce development, achieve economies of scale, and promote sharing of resources and collaboration among campuses. For similar reasons, the state association of technical institute directors recommended a regional technical institute system with “regional management centers” in their 1994 proposal for

a comprehensive post-secondary technical education system.^{iv} Paul Elsner, former chancellor of Maricopa Community College District in Arizona, one of the most respected community college leaders in the nation, and a team of consultants examined the district structure for the Board of Regents in October 2002, and emphasized that this was a reasonable organizational approach—if actions were taken to make it work.^v For several reasons, many of which go beyond the scope of the current study, the district structure is not yet reaching its potential:

- A. The districts play an ambiguous role between the campuses and the central LTC office. The district role appears to be somewhere between a subdivision of the central office, responsible for top-down implementation of central directions, and a quasi-executive role responsible for the administration of several campuses. The district vice chancellor has broad authority related to budgets, allocation of resources, personnel decisions and other aspects of campus operations, but NCHEMS found misunderstanding at different levels of the system of the actual scope of the vice chancellor's authority. Each campus is accredited by COE as a separate entity, but from an academic governance viewpoint, it is not clear where responsibility for campus operations actually resides: at the level of the campus, the vice chancellor, or at the level of the LTC chancellor. Actual practice in division of responsibility between the campus deans and the vice chancellors appears to vary among regions by the vice chancellor's leadership style and preferences. Communication about policy and intent on key issues such as budget authority, purchasing and personnel decisions seem to be far from clear thereby adding to misinformation and confusion.
- B. An effective district structure should promote collaboration and sharing of resources among the campuses in the region and between these campuses and the community colleges, universities, and business leaders. In practice, the long-standing culture of competition and lack of local collaboration among the technical college campuses remains. Some efforts are being made to achieve regional economies of scale (for example, in automotive technology), but the policies and incentive structure for collaboration are not in place
- C. The focus of the state-level LTC structure is primarily on governing and running institutions and resolving a myriad of operational issues. This focus necessarily draws attention away from needed functions of statewide leadership and coordination for a highly diverse network of institutions such as promoting partnerships with business and industry, developing links with K-12, providing incentives for collaboration among the technical college campuses and with the community colleges.
- D. The LTC maintains an administrative structure at the state level which is located apart from, and duplicates, the same services for the other institutions in the system. From NCHEMS' perspective, this is a costly and unnecessary duplication of services that could be provided through a single central LCTCS administrative and financial services operation.

- E. The reality that the 40 technical college campuses serving highly diverse regions of Louisiana are represented at the level of LCTCS by a single college creates serious problems of both substance and perception. The goals that led to the creation of LCTCS, as summarized earlier, emphasize the central role of workforce training and links with regional economic development and emphasize that the critical role of the technical college campuses should be recognized. The perception from the technical college campuses is that there is only limited advocacy for their mission at the level of the LCTCS president and the Board of Supervisors.
- F. The “vertical” structure of the LTC parallel to the structure of the community colleges is a serious barrier to regional planning and coordination of community college services. It splinters services that must be coordinated if Louisiana is going to make progress, region-by-region, in workforce and economic development. As illustrated in Figure A and the discussion above, there is already an overlap in missions in the critical areas of career development and workforce training between the technical college campuses and the community colleges. There will be an increasing convergence in mission. It is especially important that collaboration can and should take place while recognizing and strengthening the technical college mission and deliberately ensuring alignment of policies with that mission as suggested above. For example, rather than develop a district administrative structure for LTC which duplicates the same services provided by a community college in the same region, all LTC administrative and financial management (as well as other services) could be obtained through the community college on a “purchase of services” arrangement. The technical centers in Tennessee, for example, obtain all their administrative services through the local community college while maintaining their status as independent campuses. In Tennessee as in Louisiana the technical centers and the community colleges report to the same governing/management board.

Small campuses in rural communities

Most LTC campuses are comparatively small as illustrated in Figure B.

Headcount Enrollment of Postsecondary Students	Number of LTC Campuses
Less than 100	2
100 to 249	20
250 to 499	9
500 to 849	6
849 and over	3

These data include only postsecondary students and exclude high school students and prisoners. With only a few exceptions, the campuses with fewer than 250 headcount enrollment are located in rural communities. Maintaining the presence of these campuses is especially important to their communities. Nevertheless, the campuses are far too small to operate efficiently as free-standing institutions and to provide the full array of community and technical college services that their communities need. Furthermore, many of the campuses are in need of significant upgrading of facilities and equipment. It is especially important, therefore, for Louisiana to extend needed services to these communities in a manner that makes effective and efficient use of existing resources. For example, an existing small technical college campus in a rural community could serve as the delivery site for programs from other technical college campuses in the region as well as from community colleges. It could perhaps maintain some free-standing programs, but the community could have access to a broader range of services than the current campus could provide on a free-standing basis.

Links with secondary education

About 9% of the LTC headcount enrollment is of high school students. This equates to an FTE enrollment of more than 10% on eleven LTC campuses (ranging from 10.5% to 28%). On several campuses, high school students account for 40% or more of the headcount enrollment. As described below, funding is not provided to the LTC campuses to serve these students, except where special arrangements are in place with local school districts. Maintaining campuses serving a high percentage of high school students as postsecondary campuses is not a reasonable, long-term strategy. Nevertheless, some of the campuses could provide an excellent opportunity for new alternatives developed by the High School Redesign Commission to increase the percentage of students completing high school prepared for work and further education through increased collaboration between secondary education and higher education. In other cases, consideration should be given to transferring the campuses to the elementary and secondary education system.

Alignment of finance policy and mission

When the technical colleges were transferred to the LCTCS, there was an immediate need to establish finance and resource allocation policies and methodologies. As indicated earlier, some of these policies were not sensitive to the LTC mission while other dimensions of the LTC operation were not addressed. Several problems related to the current finance policy must be addressed for the LTC to be able to fulfill its mission and for Louisiana to be able to develop comprehensive, coordinated community and technical college services in every region. Referring back to Figure A, the following is a review of the financing issues faced by the LTC as it seems to serve the primary clients listed on the left-hand column of Figure A:

- A. In-School Youth. Under current policy, there is no funding for high school students served by LTC campuses, except where special agreements are in place with local school districts:
- FTEs are not counted for Regents' funding formula purposes.
 - Tuition is not charged to high school students.
 - School districts do not want to lose their Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) funding. They retain students only up to the point that they will be counted for the MFP funding and then allow them to shift to the Options programs or drop out. The LTC campuses are not adequately staffed or equipped to handle the more challenging students in the Options programs.
 - Some school districts have developed cooperative relationships accompanied by funding with local LTC campuses, but this is not a consistent pattern across the state.
- B. Recent High School Graduates
- Remedial/developmental education, general education, and career preparation are included in the SCH/FTE calculations for funding, but in practice the FTE funding formula does not generate new monies unless so appropriated by the Legislature. Allocations are made by line item (e.g., mandatory increases such as benefits, etc.) and are not sensitive to enrollments. Therefore, incentives to increase enrollments do not function (although campus administrators are very aware of enrollments for which they are not funded).
 - Non-credit offerings, including short-term workforce training, that is not delivered through the formal "course" structure (see discussion above) is not counted in the funding formula and must be self-supporting.
 - Tuition at the LTC is low by any measure. It is not clear how (if at all) tuition policy and student financial aid policy are coordinated.
 - Differences in tuition between the LTC and the community colleges create serious disincentives for the community colleges to deliver general education courses on LTC campuses and engage in other collaborative arrangements.

There should be consistent tuition rates across all LCTCS units, both community and technical colleges.

- The capacity of LTC campuses to attract and retain students, especially recent high school students, depends on the campuses looking like and providing the basic student other services that one might find on a “real college” campus. Many LTC campuses are in need of resources for significant improvement in facilities, equipment and services to be competitive.
- C. Adults. There is no consistent, statewide policy to support and provide incentives for the LTC to play a major role in addressing their region’s adult learning needs, except to the extent that adults participate in LTC courses.
- Most funding for adult education is allocated and managed by BESE, and LCTCS is not a major provider. Adult education providers (e.g., local schools) offer adult education services on LTC campuses, but the LTC itself is not a designated provider.
 - The lack of available student financial aid for part-time students is a major barrier.
 - The organization of instruction according to traditional academic calendars and credit-hour based courses, and the link of SCHs to funding, negatively affects the ability of the LTC to provide rapid response, short-term training for adults. As discussed earlier, changes in LTC policies, including the move away from “open enrollment” and clock-hour based instruction, has reduced flexibility and the LTC capacity to respond to the needs of adult learners, especially those seeking short-term training.
- D. Employers. For reasons summarized above related to adults, the LTC—as well as the community colleges—receive no state funding through the higher education funding system to reward service to employers, nor does higher education funding recognize the need to build flexible capacity to respond to such demands from employers.
- Most education/training done for employers/incumbent workers is funded outside the higher education revenue stream such as from the Department of Labor, WIA funding, etc. All these sources assume that institutions have the capacity to respond to needs on a “just-in-time” basis. Funding is provided on a “purchase of service” basis and no funding is provided through the higher education funding mechanism that supports the basic capacity to compete for projects or that rewards institutions for engaging in such activities.
 - Small campuses in particular face a challenge of creating sufficient capacity and flexibility to respond to needs not delivered on a traditional calendar.

Criteria

Based on an analysis of the challenges facing Louisiana, NCHEMS used the following criteria to assess alternatives regarding the future of the LTC, including the alternative of removing the LTC from LCTCS. Does the alternative:

- A. Increase the state's capacity to move greater numbers of young people through the pipeline from secondary education to postsecondary education and training, and employment, with higher levels of knowledge and skill required for a higher skills/wage economy:
 - 1) Complementing high school reform by providing opportunities for students in danger of dropping out with the knowledge and skills for employment as well as basic skills for further education and training.
 - 2) Improving the literacy and workforce skills of the existing adult population, with emphasis on the youth (18-24 year old) population raising the education attainment, improving adult literacy.
 - 3) Expanding the training of high-level technicians, individuals with both strong academic backgrounds in mathematics and science as well as technical skills.
 - 4) Increasing the efficient use of existing institutional capacity and other resources to achieve improvements.
- B. Focus on the diverse regions of Louisiana as the "communities of solution," for addressing the state's postsecondary education and training and workforce development needs.
- C. Reaffirm a goal of continuing the development of comprehensive community and technical college services in each region—services that are configured in a way to meet the unique needs and existing institutional capacity in each region. See Figure A.
- D. Reaffirm the role and mission of the Louisiana Technical College focused on high quality, responsive training in skilled trades, training leading to industry-based certification, rapid-response workforce development and other training linked to the needs of each region.
- E. Remain consistent with the basic Constitutional and statutory requirements related to the Louisiana Technical College:
 - 1) Maintain a system-level Technical Division with redefined functions.
 - 2) Develop and maintain academic policies as well as governance and finance that are aligned with the mission of providing high quality training in the skilled trades, short-term training for industry-based certification, rapid response workforce development, and other dimensions of the technical college.
- F. Provide a system-level and region-by-region authority and responsibility for:

- 1) Promoting collaboration and sharing of resources between the technical college and other providers (primarily the community colleges and technical community colleges, but also the public universities) serving the same region and often the same employers and students.
 - 2) Promoting appropriate mission differentiation and enforcing policies to avoid unnecessary duplication in programs and services.
- G. Provide for a single point of contact, in coordination with the Department of Labor and the Workforce Investment Boards, within each region for employers and employees/students for workforce development services.
- H. Promote cost-effectiveness through:
- 1) Ensuring a necessary scale and critical mass at each site—either through capacity at the site or through collaborative relationships with other providers.
 - 2) Promoting efficient use of available public resources through collaboration among public providers serving the same region.
- I. Provide for essential institutional management capacity, for example:
- 1) Financing, management and accounting services.
 - 2) Registrar and student records management.
 - 3) Academic quality assurance and accountability.
 - 4) Information systems for operations as well as policy and accountability reporting.
 - 5) Physical plant maintenance and property management.
 - 6) Purchasing.
- J. Align policies related to academic accounting (calendars, course units, etc.), financing, governance and accountability with the mission of technical training, workforce development, short-term training for industry-based certification; avoid misapplication of policies appropriate for transfer-oriented academic programs to training programs designed to develop job-specific skills for immediate employment.
- K. Increase the opportunities for seamless student mobility between the technical college campuses and community colleges serving the same region, and vice versa.
- L. Provide for decentralized institutional governance at the regional level to ensure responsiveness to regional educational and workforce needs.
- M. Balance regional governance with system leadership and services:
- 1) Statewide leadership and coordination of rapid response workforce development.

- 2) Economies of scale on finance, accountability, purchasing, administrative support functions, data/information system.
- 3) Professional development.
- 4) Program and training module development.
- 5) Advocacy for the mission of technical training and workforce development.
- 6) Selecting, supporting and overseeing the performance of institutional/district leadership and governance.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Conclusions

- A. Removing the LTC from LCTCS and placing the technical college campuses under a separate management board would not serve the long-term interests of students, employers, or the state's priorities. It would:
 - Weaken the state's capacity to address critical needs related to workforce development and adult literacy.
 - Unnecessarily fragment services to students and employers by erecting even more serious barriers to transfer and the sharing of resources between the technical college and community colleges than exist today.
 - Require a new state-level and regional governance and administrative structure resulting in increased costs largely unrelated to improving services. Substantial investments would still be needed to improve the LTC management capacity and to make improvements in academic policies, human resource and financial management, information systems and other support services. Under any structural alternative, such improvements will be necessary in order for the technical college campuses to meet accreditation standards and be able to attract and retain students.
 - The potential would likely increase for unnecessary duplication and mission conflict between the technical college and developing community colleges and technical community colleges as these institutions expand their missions to serve their region's education and workforce training needs.
- B. The LTC has made significant progress in improving the administrative and support system for an effective technical college. It is important to continue these improvements. However, the current overall structure of the LTC as a statewide college with seven districts, and 40 independently accredited college campuses is not adequate to meet many of the criteria outlined above. We therefore recommend that changes be made to the overall governance and financing of the technical college *within* the governing authority of the LCTCS management board.

2. Recommendations

- A. Establish a goal that by 2010, Louisiana will have in place in designated regions fully accredited, coordinated, and comprehensive community college services in which the technical college is an integral—but distinct—part. The comprehensive community college services should have strong links with the region’s universities, secondary schools, adult education, economic development, and workforce services.
- Define regions based on evidence of commuting patterns and regional labor markets.
 - Implementation should follow a step-by-state process depending on each region’s readiness to change.
- B. Establish a goal that by 2010, all technical college campuses will become integrated components of regionally comprehensive community college services. Reflecting the unique circumstances of each region, several models would be possible, provided they are consistent with the overall goal expressed in #1. For example:
- A multi-site technical college which is the technical education and workforce development division of a comprehensive community college. Following this model, the community college might be renamed a “community and technical college,” seek dual accreditation from SACS and COE, and provide distinctive governance and financing arrangements for the technical and workforce development division to reinforce its unique mission.
 - A free-standing multi-site technical college which is co-located with and obtains (perhaps on a purchase of service basis) all administrative and financial management and support services from a community college. In this model, the community college and technical college students would share the use of libraries, student and other support services (following a modified “Auraria” model, the campus in Denver, Colorado, which is the site for three co-located institutions).
 - A technical college which develops as a technical community college, following the model of Sowela and L.E. Fletcher.
- C. Transfer the five to ten existing technical college campuses with the highest percentage of enrollment from secondary schools to the status of “technical secondary schools.” Consider maintaining these institutions as units within the comprehensive community and technical colleges (following models of high schools on community college campuses in other states).
- D. Roles of district vice chancellors would reflect changes in regional governance structure. For example, the vice chancellors in some regions would become the vice chancellors for technical education and workforce development in a comprehensive community and technical college, the chancellor of a free-

standing, district technical college or the chancellor of a technical community college.

- E. Decentralize institutional functions currently within the structure of the statewide LTC to regional/district institutions following one of the models outlined in #3.
- F. Reconfigure the state-level LTC capability to become the technical education and workforce development division of LCTCS. The unit would be headed by a chancellor to reflect the significance of the role for LCTCS. The unit would have no formal governing/operating responsibility for the technical college campuses. Functions of this unit would include:
 - Statewide leadership and coordination of rapid-response workforce development.
 - Statewide leadership on adult learning. The emphasis at LCTCS should be on developing the community and technical college capacity as providers and regional coordinators of adult literacy/education services.
 - Professional development and other support services to the technical education and workforce development units/colleges.
 - Curriculum/module development.
 - Advocacy for the technical education mission with the Board of Supervisors of the LCTCS.
- G. Change information systems and accountability reporting, financing policy/allocation methodology for the technical education/workforce development institutions/divisions to align with the unit mission and delivery modes, etc. Ensure that the new approaches are consistent with overall LCTCS and BoR policies and procedures.
- H. Establish consistent tuition rates across all LCTCS units, both community and technical colleges.

References

ⁱ Louisiana Technical Institute Directors' Association, "Draft for a Comprehensive Post Secondary Technical Education System, April 18, 1994; Board of Regents' Feasibility Study: Developing a Comprehensive Statewide Community College System and Establishment of Community Colleges in Specific Geographic Areas, prepared in response to Senate Concurrent Resolution Nos. 26, 55 and 134, Senate Resolution No. 63 and House Concurrent Resolution No.,155 of the 1995 Regulation Legislative Session, Adult by the Board of Regents, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, March 28, 1996.

ⁱⁱ Public Affairs Research Council of LA, Inc. "The Community College Question: Summary Report," PAR Analysis, No. 295, August 1997, pp. 1-2.

ⁱⁱⁱ Governor's Task Force on Technical and Community Colleges and Adult Education, Draft for Discussion, January 22, 1998, pp. 1-3, 14-15.

^{iv} Louisiana Technical Institute Directors' Association (1994), pp. 8-10.

^v Paul Elsner Associates (2002), Report to the Louisiana Board of Regents, October 20, 2002.

APPENDIX

Louisiana State Senate

Sen. Donald E. Hines, President, Louisiana State Senate

Sen. Robert Adley

Sen. “Nick” Gautreaux

Sen. J. Chris Ullo, Chairman, Senate Education Committee

Louisiana House of Representatives

Rep. Joseph “Joe” Salter, Speaker of the House

Rep. Peppi Bruneau

Rep. Carl Crane, Chairman, House Education Committee

Rep. Hollis Downs

Major-President, City of Baton Rouge

Mayor Melvin “Kip” Holden

Office of the Governor

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, Policy & Planning Director

Louisiana Workforce Commission

Ms. Chris Weaver, Executive Director

University Systems

Dr. Sally Clausen, President, University of Louisiana System

Dr. William Jenkins, President, Louisiana State University System

Dr. Leon Tarver, President, Southern University System

Louisiana Community and Technical College System

Ms. Kathy Sellers Johnson, Chairwoman, LCTCS Board

Dr. Walter Bumphus, President

Dr. Margaret Montgomery Richard, Chancellor, Louisiana Technical College

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer, Vice Chancellor, Louisiana Technical College, District 1

Dr. Christopher Williams, Vice Chancellor, Louisiana Technical College, District 4

Mr. John E. Corley, Campus Dean, Louisiana Technical College – Sabine Valley Campus

Ms. Phyllis Dupuis, Campus Dean, Louisiana Technical College - Gulf Area Campus

Mr. Charles T. Strong, Campus Dean, Louisiana Technical College – Northwest Campus

Louisiana Board of Regents

Dr. E. Joseph Savoie, Commissioner of Higher Education

Dr. Jimmy Clarke, Deputy Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs

Mr. Donald J. Vandal, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration

Dr. Lisa Smith-Vosper, Associate Commissioner for Workforce Education and Training