

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 78

BY REPRESENTATIVES SCHRODER, BARRAS, BURFORD, CARMODY, CARTER, CHAMPAGNE, CHANEY, DANAHAY, HARRISON, HENRY, HOFFMANN, LIGI, LORUSSO, NOWLIN, PEARSON, PUGH, RICHARD, SEABAUGH, AND TALBOT AND SENATOR NEVERS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents to study alternative uses of underutilized facilities at public postsecondary education institutions.

WHEREAS, statistical data maintained by the Board of Regents suggest that facilities at Louisiana public postsecondary institutions are underutilized; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the totality of space in the state's postsecondary education institutions accommodated 148,300 full-time students, but standards developed by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education indicated that 211,757 students could easily be accommodated in existing facility space; and

WHEREAS, based on these figures, these institutions can accommodate an additional 63,000 students within existing facility space, but reality is that enrollment numbers are trending downward; and

WHEREAS, empty space is not only costly but a missed opportunity to generate income, encourage economic development, and provide an additional resource to both public and private entities within the community; and

WHEREAS, an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 15, 2010, entitled "European Universities Look for Alternative Revenue Streams" suggests that alternative sources of financing, such as making alternative use of university infrastructure, can result in a higher level of financial autonomy at an institution; and

WHEREAS, state law authorizes alternative use of university facilities, which law provides:

R.S. 17:3353. Cooperation with public agencies

A. Each board may enter into contracts and agreements with any public agency for the establishment of state or other public offices on the property and in the buildings of the university. It also can enter into contracts and agreements for joint construction, equipment, maintenance and financing of such buildings, and enter into contracts and agreements for the joint financing, supervision and conduct of cooperative enterprises and undertakings.

B. Any public agency is authorized to enter into contracts and agreements with any board for the purposes mentioned in this Section.

WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes that consideration must be given for peak class demand times and that there is a need to utilize postsecondary facilities in a manner that does not conflict with the mission of higher education nor jeopardize the health or safety of its students and faculties and, as such, considers the following as examples of possible appropriate uses of underutilized university infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, community and technical colleges expect an increase in enrollment as the result of expected tuition and fee increases as well as stricter academic standards at four-year institutions and, in response to House Resolution No. 200 of the 2010 Regular Session of the Legislature, the Board of Regents concluded, in part, that "classroom overcrowding at community colleges may be alleviated through the use of classroom space at proximate four-year institutions... [and] the Board of Regents will continue to analyze space utilizations to promote facility sharing and to seek to address shortcomings in the current data collection system"; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Economic Development which utilizes various incentives and programs to encourage businesses to expand or relocate to Louisiana, including the Mega-Project Development Fund, various tax credits and exemptions, tax abatements, and workforce recruitment, may very well be interested in exploring the use of public postsecondary education facilities as yet another incentive to encourage economic development in this state; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Business & Technology Center, E.J. Ourso College of Business, and other like institutions, which endeavor to enhance economic development in Louisiana through the support of existing small businesses and the development of new businesses, may also be interested in utilizing otherwise underutilized postsecondary education facilities in further support of their missions; and

WHEREAS, the office of facility planning and control, division of administration, which is responsible for providing appropriate owned or leased facilities to house the operations of state government, may be able to further one of its objectives of housing state agencies in a cost-effective manner by entering into cooperative agreements with public postsecondary institutions for the use of otherwise underutilized facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO), whose mission is to strengthen, promote, and build the capacity of nonprofits through various means, including strategic collaboration, may be interested in collaborating with postsecondary education boards for use of institution facilities; and

WHEREAS, these are but a few examples of possible symbiotic relationships between public institutions of higher education, government, and the community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents to continue to address shortcomings in the data collection system necessary to identify underutilized facilities at public postsecondary education institutions, to continue to study the availability of underutilized facilities, to consider alternative and creative uses of underutilized facilities, and to engage in discussions with various entities with whom collaborative efforts can result in the use of such facilities in a manner that is fiscally or socially responsible, and to submit a written report of its findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for legislation relative to the issue, to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2012 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairman of the Board of Regents, the commissioner of higher education, the chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges, the secretary of the Department of Economic Development, the executive director of the Louisiana Business &

Technology Center, E.J. Ourso College of Business, the director of the office of facility planning and control, division of administration, and the president of the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE