

SENATE BILL NO. 304

BY SENATOR EDMONDS

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:3125.1 and Chapter 25-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of
3 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 17:3171 through 3176, relative to public post
4 secondary institutions and governing boards; to authorize the Board of Regents to set
5 policy regarding accreditation of public postsecondary institutions; to authorize
6 public postsecondary management boards to select an accreditor under certain
7 circumstances; to provide for coordination between the Board of Regents and public
8 postsecondary management boards; to provide for implementation; to provide for
9 electronic notification by certain institutions of higher education; to provide for
10 powers; to provide for duties; to provide for prohibitions; to provide for definitions;
11 to direct the Louisiana State Law Institute to make technical changes; to provide for
12 an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

13 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

14 Section 1. R.S. 17:3125.1 and Chapter 25-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised
15 Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 17:3171 through 3176, are hereby enacted to read as
16 follows:

17 **§3125.1. Accreditation; powers of the Board of Regents**

18 **The Board of Regents shall have the power to set policy regarding the**
19 **accreditation of all public postsecondary institutions, as provided in Chapter**
20 **25-B of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.**

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22 **CHAPTER 25-B. ACCREDITATION OF**

23 **PUBLIC POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**

24 **§3171. Application**

25 **Except as otherwise specifically provided by law, this Chapter shall**
26 **govern the accreditation of all public postsecondary institutions.**

27 **§3172. Definitions**

1 As used in this Chapter, the following terms have the following meanings
2 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 (1) "Board of Regents" means the coordinating body for public
4 postsecondary education that oversees policies, budgets, academic program
5 approval, and facility planning for all Louisiana universities, community
6 colleges, and technical schools, pursuant to Article VIII, Section 5 of the
7 Constitution of Louisiana and R.S. 17:3121.

8 (2) "Management board" means a governing board of a public
9 postsecondary education institution that is responsible for supervising the
10 day-to-day operations of such institutions under the overall jurisdictional
11 planning and budgetary authority of the Louisiana Board of Regents. Article
12 VIII of the Constitution of Louisiana provides that the management boards are
13 the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and
14 Mechanical College, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana
15 System, the Board of Supervisors of Southern University and Agricultural and
16 Mechanical College, and the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical
17 Colleges.

18 (3) "Public postsecondary institution" or "institution" means a public
19 college or university that is under the jurisdiction of a management board for
20 postsecondary education created by or under authority of the Constitution of
21 Louisiana.

22 §3173. Powers of the Board of Regents; coordination with management boards

23 A. In coordination with each management board of a public
24 postsecondary institution, the Board of Regents shall have the power to set
25 policy regarding each of the following:

26 (1) Accreditation of public postsecondary institutions.

27 (2) Specialized accreditation of any individual program or unit at a
28 public postsecondary institution where such accreditation is required.

29 B. The Board of Regents shall adopt policies to allow a public
30 postsecondary institution, subject to the approval of the institution's

1 management board, to seek a new institutional accreditor from a list of
2 accreditors recognized by the United States Department of Education or to seek
3 a new specialized accreditor from a list of specialized accreditors maintained by
4 the Board of Regents.

5 C. The Board of Regents, in coordination with the management boards,
6 shall develop a process of changing an institutional accreditor in a manner that
7 ensures that a public postsecondary institution remains accredited at all times
8 by an accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education.

9 D. With respect to specialized accreditation of an individual program or
10 unit, the Board of Regents shall do all of the following:

11 (1) Identify a list of units, programs, and professional schools that
12 require specialized accreditation and a corresponding list of recognized
13 accreditors.

14 (2) Adopt policies, in coordination with the management boards, to
15 ensure that each program or unit requiring specialized accreditation remains
16 accredited at all times by an accreditor from the list of accreditors maintained
17 by the Board of Regents.

18 §3174. Process for accreditation; applications; accreditors

19 A. A public postsecondary institution may seek a new accreditor for the
20 institution or for a specialized program or unit so long as the selection of an
21 accreditor and the process of seeking accreditation complies with this Chapter.

22 B. If a public postsecondary institution seeks a new accreditor, the
23 institution shall apply for approval with the institution's management board.

24 C. The public postsecondary institution shall seek an accreditor that
25 prioritizes all of the following:

26 (1) Promotes credential success and workforce outcomes.

27 (2) Promotes educational quality and affordability.

28 (3) Promotes financial stability of the public postsecondary institutions.

29 (4) Ensures appropriate accountability through a rigorous annual review
30 of the faculty.

1 D. The management board may not approve an accreditor unless the
 2 accreditor has agreed, in writing, that the accreditor will not condition the
 3 initial accreditation and will not condition any continued accreditation upon
 4 any violation of law, as prohibited in R.S. 17:3176.

5 §3175. Management boards of public postsecondary institutions

6 A. If a public postsecondary institution applies for a new accreditor, as
 7 provided in R.S. 17:3174, the management board shall do all of the following:

8 (1) Review the institution's application and determine if the proposed
 9 accreditor meets the standards and requirements set forth in this Chapter.

10 (2) Determine if the application for a new accreditor complies with the
 11 policies set forth by the Board of Regents, as provided in R.S. 17:3173.

12 B. With respect to a public postsecondary institution's accreditor or any
 13 application for a new accreditor, the management board shall, in coordination
 14 with the Board of Regents, do all of the following:

15 (1) Ensure that each public postsecondary institution that is under the
 16 management board's jurisdiction shall post on the institution's website the
 17 status of its accreditation and other documentation that the management board
 18 deems relevant that has been submitted to the accreditor to gain or maintain
 19 accreditation.

20 (2) Specify the manner and frequency that the institution is to notify or
 21 update the public on the progress of reaccreditation with the same accreditor
 22 or the process of accreditation with a new accreditor through the institution's
 23 website.

24 §3176. Prohibited accreditors

25 Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no
 26 accreditor may be chosen that conditions accreditation upon any violation of the
 27 Constitution of Louisiana or any state law.

28 Section 2. The Louisiana State Law Institute, pursuant to its statutory authority, is
 29 hereby directed to delete "Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
 30 Colleges" and replace with "accreditor recognized by the United States Department of

1 Education" in R.S. 17:3164, 3223, 3351.17, and 5029 and in any other Section in Title 17
2 or in any other Section or Code of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.

3 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
4 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
5 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
6 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
7 effective on the day following such approval.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____