

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.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_