

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report of Findings and Recommendations

*Louisiana Board of Regents
Public Colleges and Universities*

Enrollment Management Paradigm

Enrollment management is a systematic, holistic, and integrated approach to achieving enrollment goals by exerting more control over those institutional factors that shape the size and characteristics of the student body. It includes activities associated with attracting and retaining students, including marketing, recruitment, financial aid, orientation, advising, and instruction. It also involves examining institutional mission, program and service offerings, organizational structure, and resource allocation. The process relies heavily on the use of pertinent data and information for informed decision making.

Noel-Levitz

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Consulting Team.....	7
Profile of Noel-Levitz.....	7
Partner to More than 1,500 Colleges and Universities	7
Known for Getting Enrollment Results	7
Noel-Levitz Experience with System and Multiple Campus Projects	8
Profile of Performa, Inc.	9
Profile of MicroSource	10
The Systemwide Strategic Enrollment Analysis Process	11
Phase One: Data/Information Review and Analysis	12
Phase Two: Focus Group Interviews with Key Administrators and Staff Members.....	15
Noel-Levitz Consulting Team.....	15
Phase Three: Exit Executive Briefing and Written Report.....	18
Achieving Full Enrollment Potential for Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities ...	19
Summary Remarks on Retention Potential	24
Summary of Recommendations.....	26
Planning.....	26
Marketing.....	27
Recruitment.....	28
Financial Aid.....	30
Retention	30
Information Technology.....	32
Capacity.....	33

Introduction

“The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created – created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.”

John Schaar
Futurist

Noel-Levitz, together with its partner organizations, Performa and MicroSource, conducted a Strategic Enrollment Analysis of the public colleges and universities in Louisiana for the Board of Regents during the month of September 2001. This executive summary:

1. Includes brief profiles of each organization.
2. Describes the steps followed in conducting the analysis.
3. Provides a brief conceptual framework for enrollment management on which the analysis and recommendations are based.
4. Lists 67 separate recommendations in seven categories: planning, marketing, recruitment, financial aid, retention, information technology, and capacity.

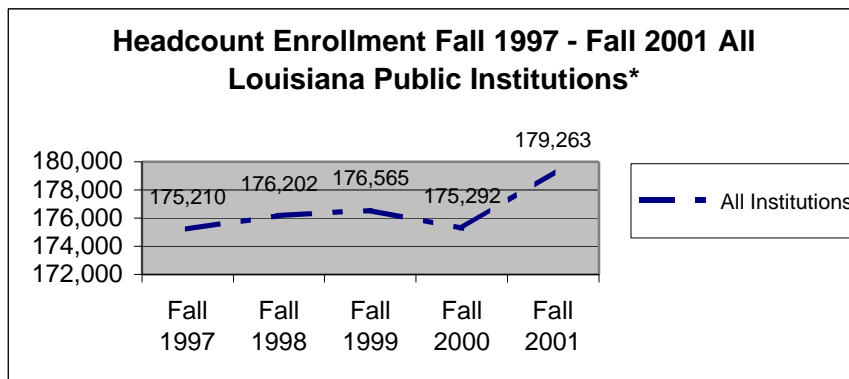
The full 163-page report plus appendix includes a situation analysis describing the environment for public postsecondary education in Louisiana, an analysis of the forces supporting or inhibiting the achievement of enrollment goals statewide based on our focus group interviews and the information provided to the consultants by the campuses, and a more detailed version of the 67 recommendations. We believe that these recommendations, if implemented fully and effectively by the public postsecondary institutions, will lead to the achievement of annual enrollment goals and afford both the Board of Regents and the individual campuses control over enrollment.

Although the current environment for public postsecondary education in Louisiana was described as the most favorable in years, the state’s public colleges and universities have struggled to provide high quality programs and services in the face of serious external threats and challenges. Among them:

- Louisiana has one of the nation’s highest percentages of illiterate adults.
- One in five adults in Louisiana has not graduated from high school.
- In Louisiana, only one in five adults has a college degree.
- Proportionately, lower numbers of minority students enroll or remain in postsecondary education.
- At every level, there is a statewide teacher shortage.

- In general, the skills of Louisiana’s workforce are inadequate in today’s technological economy.
- Following 12 budget cuts in ten years, Louisiana’s public postsecondary institutions are seriously underfunded.
- The number of high school graduates in Louisiana is projected to decline from 46,689 in 2001 to 43,989 in 2006 (-6 percent) to 40,984 in 2012 (-12 percent). Louisiana is the only southern state projecting a decline in population.
- Only seven percent of students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions come from out of state.
- Average ACT composite score of enrolled freshmen in Louisiana is 20.2 compared to 22.1 nationally in 2000.
- Minority students currently account for 36.7 percent of the enrollment at public postsecondary institutions.

Headcount enrollment among all public postsecondary institutions in Louisiana, excluding the Louisiana Technical College, remained relatively flat between 1997 and 2000, growing from 175,210 to 175,292 students. In 2001, headcount enrollment systemwide grew to 179,263 students, representing an increase of 3,971 students or 2.3 percent.



*Excluding Louisiana Technical College

The following table shows the number and percentage change in headcount enrollment between fall 2000 and fall 2001 for each system of public colleges and universities in Louisiana:

Headcount Enrollment Fall 1997 – Fall 2001 All Louisiana Public Institutions							
All Public Institutions	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	# Change	% Change
Grand Total*	175,210	176,202	176,565	175,292	179,263	3,971	2.27%

Note: Data from the campuses of the Louisiana Technical College (LTC) are NOT included in grand total shown above.

Change in Headcount Fall 2000 – Fall 2001 Louisiana Public Institutions

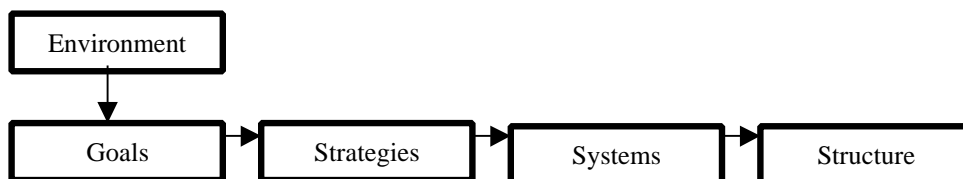
	# Change	% Change
University of Louisiana System	(656)	-0.83%
Louisiana State University System	1,750	2.93%
Southern University System	(381)	-2.60%
Louisiana Community and Technical College System *	3,258	14.85%

* Does not include Louisiana Technical College

According to the *Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education: 2001* developed by the Louisiana Board of Regents in conjunction with representatives from each of the postsecondary education systems, the enrollment-related goals for 2005 are:

- Increase participation in public postsecondary education two percent.
- Increase minority participation in public postsecondary education five percent.
- Increase the percentage of first-time, full-time entering freshmen retained to the second year in community colleges and universities five percentage points.
- Increase the three-year graduation rate at community colleges and the six-year graduation rate at baccalaureate degree-granting institutions by a combined total of five percentage points.
- Increase the number of students earning baccalaureate degrees in education by seven percent.
- Raise the students’ level of satisfaction in Louisiana’s baccalaureate degree-granting institutions to the national average for each institution’s SREB/Carnegie classification. At the two-year institutions, maintain a level of student satisfaction at or above the national average for similar institutions.

In our judgment, these goals are realistic and attainable – but only if the colleges and universities change their approach to managing enrollment. The insanity principle is defined as continuing to do the same thing, but expect different results. Noel-Levitz strongly believes that enrollment management is among the most viable strategies for achieving annual enrollment goals. The diagram which follows explains why.



The Louisiana public postsecondary institutions compete for students in a rapidly changing environment that is filled with both threats and opportunities, some of them described previously. These environmental threats and opportunities, in conjunction with each institution’s strengths

and weaknesses, combine in the diagram above to influence the development of clear and realistic goals. During the course of the strategic enrollment analysis, the consultants learned that there is little or no commitment at the campus level to the stated goals in the Board of Regents' Master Plan. Focus group participants described the goals as worthy and they in no way opposed them. They simply did not view them as relevant to their respective campuses. It will be essential for the Board of Regents to clarify and build commitment to institutional enrollment goals that are market- and mission-specific and that contribute directly to the statewide vision for public postsecondary education in Louisiana for 2005.

Once clear enrollment goals have been set by each institution, the colleges and universities must commit to a strategy to achieve them. Enrollment management is the strategy embraced by an increasing number of colleges and universities to support the achievement of annual and strategic enrollment goals. Simply defined, enrollment management is an institutionwide, systematic, comprehensive, research-driven approach designed to locate, attract, and retain the students the institution wishes to serve.

After reaching agreement on a strategy for achieving goals, the institutions should review and revise as necessary the various systems involved. Some of the systems that are integral to enrollment management include marketing, recruiting, admissions, financial aid, orientation, registration, student life, academic advising, instruction, the technology infrastructure, and atmospherics. In other words, just about everything a college or university does to attract and retain students can be viewed as a system that either supports or inhibits implementation of an enrollment management strategy.

The strategic enrollment assessment conducted by Noel-Levitz included the review of a number of the enrollment management systems – marketing, recruiting, admissions, financial aid, retention, etc. – as currently implemented on the campuses throughout the state. Many of the recommendations presented here focus on changes or additions to the systems used to manage enrollment.

Finally as the diagram suggests, institutions seeking to implement an enrollment management strategy should review and revise their organizational structure to ensure that offices and systems are aligned properly to support the implementation of the plan that will best achieve goals. The report includes observations and recommendations about the enrollment goals and the strategies, systems, and structure related to enrollment management statewide.

The Noel-Levitz consulting team thanks all the more than 200 members of the Board of Regents and System staffs, and campus representatives whose open and candid participation made this analysis possible. We unanimously agree that the outlook for public postsecondary education in Louisiana is bright. We believe that the full and effective implementation of the recommendations presented in the report will enable each of the Louisiana public colleges and universities to meet or exceed enrollment goals by 2005.

The Consulting Team

Profile of Noel-Levitz

Faced with mounting pressures and increasing competition, campus leaders turn first to Noel-Levitz, the results-oriented consulting firm that specializes in all aspects of enrollment management, including staff development, student recruitment, financial aid, student retention, market research and publications, and Web site development.

Partner to More than 1,500 Colleges and Universities

Over the past 28 years, our consultants have partnered with more than 1,500 colleges and universities, public and independent, two-year and four-year, in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces, and six countries abroad.

Known for Getting Enrollment Results

Independent research has confirmed that we are the first place colleges and universities turn for outside enrollment counsel (Core Group, 1998; Product Innovators, 1995). Our work gets results not only in enrollment numbers, but in academic profile, student body diversity, net operating revenue, retention, and distribution of students by gender, academic major, and geography. Noel-Levitz provides full-service support in:

- Enrollment and financial aid management

Each year, our experienced enrollment team works with scores of campuses throughout the country to integrate recruitment, retention, financial aid, and other strategies in a comprehensive approach to enrollment and net revenue management. We also convene the North American Enrollment Management Institute and the Presidential Enrollment Management Institute for campus decision-makers.

- Noel-Levitz client institutions seeking to increase first-year student enrollment achieve an average growth of 15.3 percent.
- Client institutions seeking increases in net operating revenue using our financial aid impact service, the Enrollment and Revenue Management System, averaged gains in net revenue of \$748,000.

- Student retention

As convener of the National Conference on Student Retention, Noel-Levitz has helped hundreds of institutions across North America to reduce dropout rates without lowering academic standards. Dedicated to student success and persistence, we partner with institutions by offering assessment instruments, faculty and staff development programs, institutional research, national surveys, and on-site consulting.

More than 1,000 institutions used our student assessment and diagnostic services last year.

Noel-Levitz Experience with System and Multiple Campus Projects

Noel-Levitz has extensive experience facilitating enrollment management projects with systems and multiple campuses. Recent work has included:

- North Carolina State College System
- Indiana Community Colleges (via Indiana Commission of Higher Education)
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU)
- Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Depending on individual client needs, the following is a representative list of project elements that have been incorporated in our system projects:

- Recruitment consulting
- Retention consulting
- Enrollment Opportunities Analyses
- Annual and strategic enrollment planning
- Predictive Modeling
- Staff training and development
- Enrollment Revenue Management Services (ERMS)
- Automation of recruitment and telecounseling functions
- Systemwide and institution-specific market research
- Recruitment publications and Web site development
- Retention tools

Profile of Performa, Inc.

Performa is an organization of planners, architects, and engineers committed to a systematic approach of linking capital assets with business strategies, resulting in the creation of *high performance environments*. We define high performance environments in higher education as those which influence student and parent choice; retain students, faculty and staff, excite fundraising momentum; and integrate capital decisions with business strategy.

Performa has assembled a diverse and talented team to serve our higher education clients. This team includes planners, architects, and engineers – a number of whom have held administrative and academic positions at colleges and universities around the country.

Our Performa team possesses expertise in the following areas:

- Campus Master Planning
- Private Higher Education Administration
- Building Programming
- Feasibility Studies
- Fundraising Assistance
- Architectural Design
- Engineering Design (structural, mechanical, electrical)
- Facilities Condition Assessment and Corrective Maintenance Planning
- Operations and Maintenance Assessment and Planning

For our campus master planning work, we have developed a network of specialized complementary consultants who we involve in our projects or introduce to our clients, as appropriate. Working with these consultants, we bring a holistic strategy of understanding a college's enrollment management, institutional advancement, communications, strategic planning, and financial goals.

Performa, Inc. was established in 1995 as a corporation licensed to do business in Wisconsin. Prior to spinning off as an independent company, the core of the Performa team was developing a unique approach to providing planning, architectural, and engineering services within another firm – CPR Associates, Inc. That firm, through two other firm names, traces its origin to 1973.

Performa currently has a staff of over 55 individuals, including architects and engineers who are licensed to operate and practice in Wisconsin and other states across the country.

Profile of MicroSource

MicroSource is a managed service provider that helps customers run their businesses better by providing end-to-end information technology management. Based in Greenwood Village, Colorado, and privately held, MicroSource specializes in strategic managed services and technology solutions for organizations that need to focus on their core business.

MicroSource was founded in January 1995, with the expressed goal of providing complete IT management to organizations who need to focus on their core business. CH2M HILL, an industry leader in environmental consulting, engineering, and operations management, quickly signed on as MicroSource's first customer. Today, MicroSource is recognized as one of the fastest growing companies in America - ranking 115th on the Inc. Magazine 500 fastest growing companies for 1999 and recognized by the Denver Business Journal as one of the top 20 fastest growing businesses in Denver for the past three years. The company has grown to 60 employees and operates from its state-of-the-art communication center and headquarters located in the Denver Technological Center to service hundreds of customers including AT&T Broadband, Adams County School District 50, First Data Corp., Hall & Evans, LLC, Noel-Levitz, RNL Design and many others.

Our vision is to be the leading managed services provider of network-based business solutions. MicroSource is the end-to-end solution that allows organizations to fully leverage technology while maintaining focus on their core business.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report of Findings and Recommendations

Louisiana Board of Regents · Public Colleges and Universities

The Systemwide Strategic Enrollment Analysis Process

The systemwide strategic enrollment analysis resulted from the issuance by the Louisiana Board of Regents on July 17, 2001, of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to conduct a public higher education systemwide strategic enrollment assessment. Following is the work statement from section 4A of the RFP document:

“The contractor is expected to provide a strategic enrollment assessment of Louisiana’s public postsecondary system for the purpose of developing institutional action plans designed to facilitate successful attainment of the statewide goals and objectives identified in the *Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education: 2001*.”

Noel-Levitz submitted a proposal to the Louisiana Board of Regents on August 15, 2001, and was notified on August 24, 2001, that it had been selected as the contractor to provide an external analysis of the marketing, recruitment, financial aid, and retention strategies and tactics systemwide. This analysis was motivated by the Louisiana Board of Regents’ desire to facilitate the successful attainment of the statewide goals and objectives identified in the *Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education: 2001* (see the appendix of the full report for a complete copy of the Master Plan).

This executive summary and the complete written report are intended to provide feedback by the contractor to the Louisiana Board of Regents on current enrollment-related issues, strategies, and practices, as well as include a set of recommendations designed to assist Louisiana public colleges and universities achieve both their short- and long-term enrollment goals. The systemwide strategic enrollment analysis had the following five major goals:

1. Analyze the present state of enrollment in Louisiana public postsecondary education.
2. Evaluate and comment on the projected impact on enrollment of the new admissions criteria as proposed in the Master Plan.

3. Assess statewide and institutional:
 - Enrollment goals
 - Enrollment management strategies and organizational structure
 - Commitment of resources necessary to achieve enrollment goals (e.g., human, fiscal, facilities, technology)
4. Assess potential facility and capacity issues systemwide.
5. Assess the statewide and campus cultures and climate for change.

Noel-Levitz would like to recognize the staff at the various Boards and public colleges and universities who, on short notice, were instrumental in compiling the institution-specific information and materials used in the analysis.

The systemwide strategic enrollment analysis progressed in the three phases described below:

1. Data/information review and analysis
2. Focus group interviews with key administrators and staff members
3. Exit executive briefing and written report

Phase One: Data/Information Review and Analysis

This phase included two separate data/information review steps. The majority of Louisiana public institutions were asked to complete and return a consultant-provided *Institutional Fact Finder* (see appendix of the full report for a copy of the four-year university and two-year community/technical college versions of the Institutional Fact Finder). The Fact Finders were designed to assist Noel-Levitz consulting staff to better understand specific institutional enrollment goals and the strategies currently in place to achieve them. Specifically, the Fact Finder explored current marketing, recruiting, financial aid, and retention strategies and tactics, and provided information about fiscal, human, and technological resources devoted to the enrollment management effort.

Twenty-three Fact Finders were sent to the Louisiana public two- and four-year colleges and universities. All four-year universities and seven of nine two-year community colleges submitted completed Fact Finders resulting in an overall participation rate of 91 percent. Fact Finders were not used with the technical college nor professional/specialty schools included in the focus group phase of the analysis.

Noel-Levitz also requested supplemental enrollment-related information and data from the Louisiana universities and community colleges participating in the analysis. Institutions were given additional time to compile the following information, which was also reviewed by Noel-Levitz consultants as part of the analysis process:

General Information

1. College catalog
2. Institutional self-study report
3. Institutional strategic plan
4. Organization chart
5. Description of institutional committee structure
6. Campus map
7. Institutional fact book

Recruitment Materials and Information

1. Copy of current recruitment plan
2. Five-year enrollment history showing total enrollment, new student enrollment, and enrollment by selected student characteristics (e.g., gender, racial ethnicity, age, test score, high school GPA, parish, high school attended)
3. Five-year admissions funnel history showing the number of inquiries, applicants, admits, deposits/confirmations, enrolled students, and related conversion and yield rates
4. Current year's recruitment budget
5. Enrollment unit organization structure and position descriptions for admissions/recruitment staff members
6. Listing of inquiry source codes with yield rates
7. Enrollment projections and goals
8. Summary of direct mail criteria, mailings, and results
9. Telecounseling/telemarketing activity report
10. Recruiter territory assignments and goals
11. Previous enrollment-related consulting reports
12. Admissions system flow chart and timelines
13. A list of major recruitment issues/concerns at your institution

Retention

1. Retention and graduation data from the past three years by class and for any subpopulation (e.g., low ability, gender, racial-ethnicity, part-time, commuter, residential, athletes) for which the institution tracks retention
2. Copy of current retention plan
3. Results of any recent student opinion/satisfaction student studies
4. Results of any withdrawing/non-returning studies
5. Recent reports or recommendations of campus retention committee/task force
6. Orientation program materials
7. Brief description of major retention-related strategies including freshman seminar, academic advising system, "early-alert system," academic support services, special populations, etc.
8. A brief description of the student intake-process (e.g., orientation assessment, placement, advising/registration)
9. A brief summary of current efforts designed to improve the teaching/learning process (e.g., collaborative learning strategies, learning communities, center for teaching excellence, academic support services, supplemental instructions, teaching awards, tutoring/summer bridge programs)
10. A list of any current specific quality of student life and learning (retention-related) issues/concerns important to your institution

Marketing and Communications Materials and Information

1. A list of five-to-ten chief competitors (institutions with which you compete for new students)
2. A copy of all major recruitment publications
3. A flow chart depicting your communication plan with prospective students
4. Samples of recent institutional advertising
5. Copy of current marketing plan
6. Your institution's Web site address and a brief description of how the current institutional Web site is managed and updated
7. A complete set of current recruitment letters used to communicate with prospective students
8. A copy of any recent pertinent enrollment-related market research studies/reports
9. ACT/College Board class profiles or market analysis reports

10. A list of ZIP codes and/or parish names in your primary market
11. A list of what you consider your most important institutional market research needs

Financial Aid Materials and Information

1. A complete set of financial aid and scholarship forms, brochures, publications, and letters used to communicate with prospective and returning students
2. Five-year trends and projected changes in direct cost of attendance
3. Description of any institutional merit or no-need scholarship program
4. Section of the Financial Aid Policy and Procedures manual describing institutional packaging philosophy and procedures (if not included in the manual, please provide a brief written description)

Phase Two: Focus Group Interviews with Key Administrators and Staff Members

During the week of September 17-21, 2001, a team of senior Noel-Levitz officers/consultants and Noel-Levitz partners from Performa Inc. and MicroSource conducted an extensive set of focus group interviews with the following groups in Baton Rouge, Louisiana:

- Selected representatives from Louisiana's public colleges and universities
- System office staff
- Board of Regents staff

The interviews afforded the Noel-Levitz team with the opportunity to explore in depth the Master Plan and institutional enrollment goals, enrollment-related strengths, opportunities to improve enrollment results, current strategies, systems, structures, and tactics being used to achieve enrollment goals, as well as discuss enrollment issues and concerns.

Following is a listing of the Noel-Levitz consulting team that conducted the focus groups (see appendix in the full report for biographical sketches):

Noel-Levitz Consulting Team

Noel-Levitz – Denver Office
5161 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite 100
Littleton, CO 80122
Phone: (303) 694-3930
FAX: (303) 741-5620

Noel-Levitz – Iowa Office
2101 ACT Circle
Iowa City, IA 52245-9581
Phone: (319) 337-4700
FAX: (319) 337-5274

- Thomas Williams, President/CEO – Co-Project Manager and Leadership Assessment – Denver
E-mail: tom-williams@noellevitz.com

- David Crockett, Senior Vice President – Co-Project Manager and Leadership Assessment – Denver
E-mail: dave-crockett@noellevitz.com
- Kevin Crockett, Senior Vice President – Recruitment Assessment – Denver
E-mail: kevin-crockett@noellevitz.com
- Gary Fretwell, Vice President – Recruitment Assessment – Denver
E-mail: gary-fretwell@noellevitz.com
- Teresa Farnum, Vice President for Retention Services – Denver
E-mail: teresa-farnum@noellevitz.com
- Charlie Hutchins, Vice President – Technology Assessment – Denver
E-mail: charlie-hutchins@noellevitz.com
- Ruth Sims, Senior Vice President for Market Research Services
Market Research Assessment – Denver
E-mail: ruth-sims@noellevitz.com
- Trish Adair Harp – Project Coordinator – Iowa City
E-mail: trish-adair-harp@noellevitz.com
- Mark Heffron, Senior Vice President for Financial Aid Services
Financial Aid Assessment – Iowa City
E-mail: mark-heffron@noellevitz.com

MicroSource

6161 S. Syracuse Way, Suite 100
Greenwood Village, CO 80111
Phone: (303) 706-0990

- Alec Wallis, Vice President
Technology Assessment
- Richard Crockett, Vice President
Chief Technology Officer

Performa

301 N. Broadway
P.O. Box 5156
DePere, WI 54115
Phone: (920) 336-9929

- Thomas Gavic, President
Capacity Assessment

- Allan Mitchler, Vice President for Advancement and Research
Capacity Assessment

The appendix in the full report contains the names of the approximately 200 persons who participated in the focus group interview phase.

While the discussions varied depending on the composition of the focus group, they included the following general areas of inquiry:

- A review of the present marketing, recruiting, and retention strategies and plans including specific enrollment goals, objectives, and strategies;
- A review of any available market research and ways that the research is being used in formulating current action plans and current position in the marketplace;
- The present and desired position and image in the marketplace;
- A review of current admissions operations and systems to communicate with students at the inquiry, application, and admit stages;
- Ways the institution is target marketing – according to audience;
- Present conversion and yield strategies;
- Strategic use of financial aid in meeting enrollment objectives;
- The use of telecounseling in the recruitment program;
- The recruitment publications, brochures, and advertisements used to promote and position the institution;
- Database enrollment management procedures and use of data for analysis, tracking, projections, and reporting;
- Current utilization of human resources including admissions staff, faculty, and students;
- The use of technology to enhance recruitment;
- A review of computer capability in support of the enrollment program;
- Organizational structure for enrollment management;
- A review of retention and attrition statistics and the effectiveness of current retention strategies and action programs;
- Comments from the institution's perspective on the enrollment goals contained in chapter one of the *Board of Regents State of Louisiana Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education: 2001*; and

- Other helpful comments and observations pertinent to the assessment by Noel-Levitz of current marketing recruitment and retention strategies.

The focus groups were designed to identify major enrollment-related themes, strengths, and opportunities across institutions and were not intended to result in specific institutional recommendations. The recommendations resulting from the analysis, however, are appropriate for most Louisiana public colleges and universities.

Phase Three: Exit Executive Briefing and Written Report

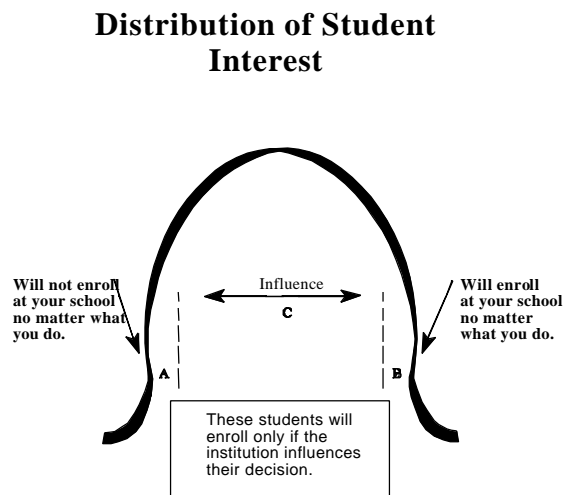
The week of focus group interviews concluded with a four-hour exit executive briefing for the leadership and staffs of the Board of Regents and system offices. The purpose of the exit briefing was to enable Noel-Levitz to present initial observations, share some preliminary recommendations, and receive reactions. This session formed the basis for the written report.

In the full report, the consultants provide their analysis of the Louisiana public colleges' and universities' current enrollment state, along with the specific recommendations for action that they believe will make the greatest contribution toward the achievement of short- and longer-term enrollment goals.

It is important to note in closing this section on the process used to conduct the systemwide strategic enrollment analysis, that it was understood a review of data/information, materials, and one week of focus groups is not adequate to fully understand all of the complexities and nuances of each individual institution's marketing, recruiting, and retention programs. This obviously would take a longer and more sustained campus-based working relationship than this process allowed. However, the Noel-Levitz consulting team was able to form a strong impression and reach a number of conclusions regarding the current state of enrollment management at Louisiana public colleges and universities. The team also identified a number of specific recommendations that can be adapted by institutions across each of the systems. While Noel-Levitz believes we were able to accurately assess "current state," any errors in interpretation or major omissions are the consultants' responsibility.

Achieving Full Enrollment Potential for Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities

Three enrollment models and the summary remarks on student retention best illustrate why Noel-Levitz believes that Louisiana's public colleges and universities have significant potential to grow and shape enrollment in the years ahead. Growing and shaping enrollment begins with influencing the decisions of students who, by definition, will not enroll unless the institutions do something new and different to intervene. Achieving sustained growth over time will require statewide attention to the portfolio of programs and services that serve to attract and retain students. The three enrollment models that describe these concepts are the bell-shaped curve showing the distribution of student interest, the enrollment funnel, and the growth strategy matrix. The first of these is the bell-shaped curve:



All the prospective students who inquire to a public college/university each year can be divided into one of the three groups under the bell curve. Students under the left side of the curve marked "A" are students who will not enroll at the institution under any circumstance, no matter how effective the marketing/recruitment program. They considered the institution their second, third, or fourth choice institution and having gained admission to their first choice college/university and having found it to be affordable, they will enroll there. The challenge for the enrollment effort is to be able to identify students in this group and avoid wasting time and resources in a lost cause trying to recruit them. This is achieved by systematically qualifying the prospect, inquiry, and applicant pools or using sophisticated predictive modeling techniques.

Students under the right side of the curve marked "B" consider the institution as their first-choice institution. They will enroll in spite of anything the institution does or does not do or how ineffective the recruitment program. It is necessary to facilitate their enrollment and not give the students a reason to re-consider their decision. Relatively few colleges and universities receive inquiries from enough of this student category to achieve new student enrollment goals each year

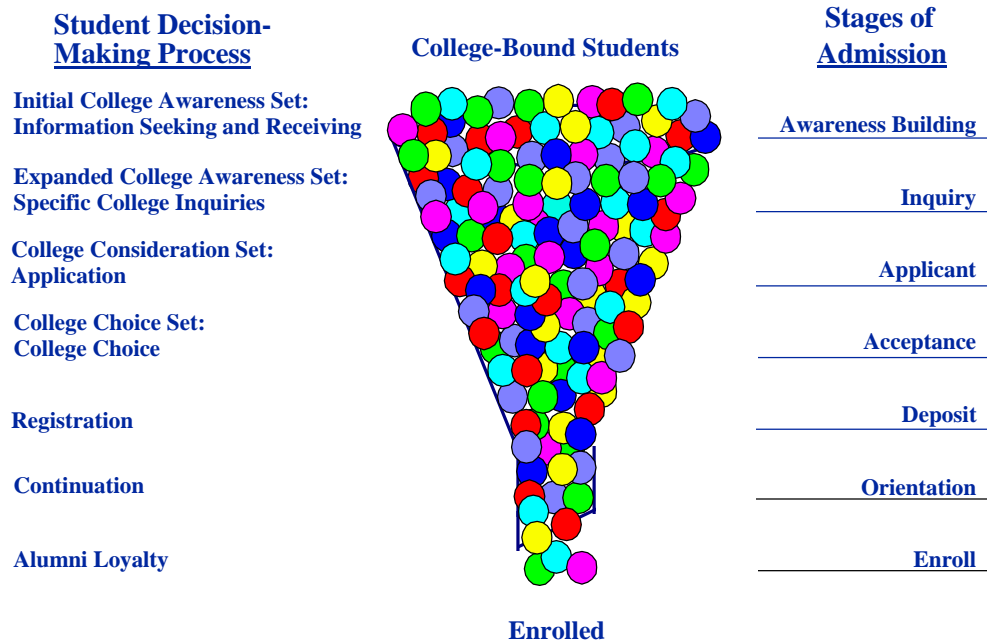
exclusively from this group. The challenge is to be able to identify students in this group and avoid spending too much time and resources recruiting them, since they will enroll anyway. Unfortunately, the primary focus of many of the current recruitment programs, particularly in community/technical colleges and Selective III institutions is to facilitate the enrollment of students who plan to attend already. Growth or change in enrollment will not result from working with this group of students.

The third, and generally the largest group, is between the two extremes under the bell curve. These are targeted students whose post-secondary decision is uncertain, but where a particular Louisiana college/university is a good choice and meets their educational needs – they just don't know enough about the institution to make an informed and favorable decision. By definition, their decision must be influenced in order for them to apply for admission and enroll. This is generally accomplished through improved personal, written, electronic, and phone communications. It is this group we are targeting for nearly all of the recruiting recommendations in the report. In short, we believe the institutions are not currently doing as effective a job as possible of favorably influencing decisions to attend their institution.

The second model presented is the enrollment funnel which illustrates the three strategies any Louisiana public college or university can use to change the size or profile of the new student enrollment:

1. Increase the size or change the characteristics of the inquiry pool;
2. Improve the conversion and yield rates at each stage of the admissions funnel; or
3. A combination of these strategies: increase the size or change the shape of the inquiry pool, *and* improve the conversion/yield rates.

The Enrollment Funnel



As indicated in the full report, complete funnel data are lacking in many of the colleges and universities which prevents any meaningful analysis. Following are the average conversion and yield rates for two-year and four-year public colleges and universities from the Noel-Levitz *Fall 1997 National Enrollment Management Survey*.

National Benchmark Conversion and Yield Rates	
National Public Two-year College and University	
Inquiry to applicant	54%
Application to admit	90%
Admit to enroll	77%
National Public Four-year College and University	
Freshman	
Inquiry to applicant	22%
Application to admit	74%
Admit to enroll	45%
Transfer	
Inquiry to applicant	N/A
Application to admit	70%
Admit to enroll	66%

Based on focus group discussions, Noel-Levitz believes that for most institutions in Louisiana the best opportunity for enrollment growth or shaping is to increase the conversion rate from inquiry to applicant.

Growing and/or shaping freshman and transfer student enrollment at Louisiana public colleges and universities in the future will involve strategies to:

- Attract more of the “right” inquiries – students with the desired characteristics and with higher propensity to enroll and persist;
- Manage the conversion rate from inquiry to application for admission in order to build critical mass in the annual applicant pool; and
- Manage the annual yield rate from offer of admission to enrollment by positioning the college/university as the institution of choice.

Successfully managing the enrollment funnel will be more complex and sophisticated when shaping, rather than growth, is the goal.

The third model is the Growth Strategy Matrix depicted below:

Growth Strategy Matrix

	Existing Products	New/Modified Products
Existing Markets	Market Penetration	Product Development
New Markets	Market Development	Diversification

Marketing theory suggests that all types of organizations, including colleges/universities, can select from among only four possible growth or shaping strategies:

Market Penetration relies on capturing a larger market share by penetrating current markets more deeply with existing programs and services. Success is achieved by improving the communication systems and promotional messages, and by innovation in the form of more aggressive marketing and recruitment strategies and tactics. The Louisiana public colleges and universities have unrealized growth potential they can capitalize on by increasing their individual market penetration of targeted groups by more effective implementation of enrollment fundamentals. Many of the recommendations are market penetration strategies. Market penetration is the least costly and the least risky of the four strategies and is generally the result of enhanced communication with prospective students. For the vast majority of Louisiana colleges/universities the most promising growth strategy is to penetrate deeper into the target markets they are currently serving.

Market Development relies on offering the current product to new geographic or demographic markets – students who are not currently being served by the institution. It would appear that the best opportunities for market development strategies would reside with increasing out-of-state, graduate, adult, and transfer markets. The Louisiana Technical College will benefit from developing the capacity to offer general education and developmental courses. The Louisiana community colleges will realize enrollment growth by serving students who do not meet the minimum standards at four-year colleges and universities.

Product Development relies on product enhancements – developing new programs or services – to attract students from the same general market area and to achieve higher retention rates as a result of increased student satisfaction. Product development strategies generally are directed at current markets, and are best driven by the institution’s knowledge of and expertise in the market it serves best. Product modifications, enhancements, or innovations typically support *long-term* – rather than short-term – growth strategies. They require time for development and implementation before they can be promoted to new students or have an impact on the satisfaction levels of current students. In the field of higher education, the time required for product development can be excessive, two years or longer may elapse before students enroll specifically *because* they are attracted by new programs or services. Product development should

continue to be an important and deliberate long-term enrollment growth strategy at all public colleges and universities in Louisiana.

Diversification involves developing a new product that appeals to a new geographic or demographic market. This strategy usually involves the greatest combination of cost and risk. Diversification is not, in our judgment, a highly viable growth strategy for higher education in general, or for the public colleges and universities in Louisiana.

While product and market development should remain important long-term growth strategies for the various systems of Louisiana public postsecondary education, market penetration represents the best short-term growth strategy.

From experience, we have concluded that there are at least five major reasons why institutions fail to reach their desired enrollment state. The following table is an analysis of these factors as applied to Louisiana as identified during the statewide strategic enrollment analysis.

Five Factors Involved in Failure to Achieve Enrollment Goals

Factor	Consultant Observations
1. Failure to do the right things (enrollment fundamentals)	The report and recommendations focus on opportunities identified in the Louisiana public colleges and universities recruitment and retention program. Clearly, all have opportunities to improve the enrollment fundamentals necessary for a successful enrollment management program.
2. Failure to do things right (implementation)	It is difficult to ascertain in a focus group environment how staff actually implement recruitment/retention strategies. Only a more sustained working relationship with the various institutions would enable the consultant to determine implementation effectiveness.
3. Unwillingness to provide the necessary resources (fiscal, human, facilities, equipment)	The Louisiana Board of Regents and individual colleges/universities may need to both redirect and invest additional resources in developing a state-of-the-art enrollment program that will achieve short- and long-term goals.
4. Inadequate product	The consultants were generally impressed with the overall quality of the institution's educational programs and services. Product deficiencies do not appear to be a major impediment to achieving enrollment goals for most Louisiana public colleges/universities.
5. Adequate product that suffers from poor market position/image	In the opinion of the consultant, the Louisiana colleges/universities must continue to build greater awareness and reputation in their primary service areas and identify their "points of difference" (PODs) or "unique selling points" (USPs) in more compelling ways. This needs to occur to effectively combat increasing competition from other colleges and universities, both public and non-public. Additionally, the Board of Regents should avoid the stigma of labeling the four-year public institutions according to admission selectivity.

In summary, the consultants believe that achieving the student enrollment goals contained in the Board of Regents' Master Plan – enrolling more and better students, increasing diversity, improving retention, and student success – are realistic and achievable and likely could be accomplished with more effective enrollment management programs across the various systems of public postsecondary education in Louisiana.

Summary Remarks on Retention Potential

There is tremendous potential for increasing retention and graduation rates by improving the quality of student life and learning at the public institutions in Louisiana. What is most important in achieving the goals of the Master Plan is that each institution develop a clear retention plan with goals consistent with those of the Master Plan; strategies to achieve the goals; and action plans that include a step-by-step process, timelines, responsibility, budget considerations, and assessment techniques.

The issues and necessary strategies that appear to be themes across the system and have resulted in the recommendations included in the report.

1. Course completion

- Implement an early-alert system, using technology to facilitate an effective program
- Use Supplemental Instruction
- Implement incentives and disincentives regarding high course drop rates

2. Involvement of faculty

- Offer ongoing seminars related to the role of faculty in retention
- Offer ongoing opportunities to learn new techniques that focus on learning outcomes

3. Academic advising

- Conduct a review of the advising program
- Offer training for academic advisors in developmental advising

4. Stopped-out and dropped-out students

- Designate a director of retention
- Pilot a recruit-back program that can be enhanced during each of the next few academic years

5. Course availability

- Ensure that decisions related to course offerings have a top priority of enabling students to enroll in courses required in their program

- Address the “course shopping” phenomenon to increase the number of available seats
- Explore creative programming options other than semester to accelerate degree-completion
- Formalize dual enrollment programs with local high schools

6. Quality Service

- Articulate a service mission statement
- Request that all offices review and revise policies that are generally known to cause difficulties to students
- Implement a quality-service training programming that is a part of new staff orientation, but also continues on an ongoing basis for all staff

One of the most important concepts to keep in mind as the Louisiana systems move forward in the initiative to improve the quality of student life and learning—with a goal of increasing student retention and graduation rates—is that there is no “silver bullet.” Improvements will come from a comprehensive program of retention planning and implementation that includes, for many of the Louisiana institutions, most of the strategies listed above. Shifts in student and academic culture do not occur because a few disjointed programs are implemented, but fairly dramatic changes can be effected with a cohesive, complete retention program.

Summary of Recommendations

“What we think, or what we know, or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.”

John Ruskin
19th Century English Essayist and Reformer

The recommendations presented in the report are intended to focus time, energy, and resources on what the consultants believe are the strategies and priorities that will lead to the accomplishment of the Board of Regents’ Master Plan enrollment goals. The full report presents more detailed versions of the recommendations, including rationale where appropriate. This executive summary lists all 67 recommendations by major area of inquiry.

Following each recommendation, we indicate whether the individual campuses, the Board of Regents, or the respective system office should assume responsibility for implementation. In addition, we use the following priority rating system as a possible method for organizing the implementation effort.

A = Vital
B = Important
C = Optional

Planning

1. Compile a statewide enrollment planning database to aid enrollment managers in setting realistic goals and identifying threats and opportunities in the external environment. The database should include the following:
 - Population trends and projections
 - Population pyramids by age and parish
 - Environmental scan for Louisiana and contiguous states
 - Competition study
 - Course completion rates
 - Funnel trend data including inquiries, applicants, admitted, and enrolled students
 - ACT Market Analysis Study (MAS) and Yield Analysis Study (YAS) for the state and by market segment
 - ACT profile by high school

Database development is expected to be performed simultaneously with other planning activities.

(Board of Regents, A)

2. By spring 2002, set enrollment goals consistent with mission at the institutional level, then at the Board of Regents level aggregate them to create the vision for Louisiana public postsecondary education in 2005. Negotiate institutional goals as necessary to achieve the desired state of enrollment statewide.
(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, A)
3. Build the statewide coalition needed to support the vision for Louisiana public postsecondary education for 2005, including public officials, system heads, college and university leaders, business and industry leaders, the media, and others.
(Board of Regents, A)
4. Create a statewide data warehouse to support enrollment management and the more accurate assessment of the impact on enrollment of the new admissions criteria as proposed in the Master Plan.
(Board of Regents, A)
5. Beginning with the students offered admission for fall 2001, the Board of Regents should audit each of the Selective I, II, and III institutions to determine the present status of institutional admissions decisions in order to ensure proper phase-in and achievement of admissions criteria by 2005.
(Board of Regents, A)
6. Conduct a complete assessment of the current state of enrollment management at the Louisiana Technical College.
(Board of Regents, B)

Marketing

7. Conduct a statewide marketing research project to collect current attitude and perception data for enrollment and marketing planning.
(Board of Regents, A)
8. Develop a Board of Regents' marketing publication and Web site that provide up-to-date information about all Louisiana public colleges and universities.
(Board of Regents, A)
9. Develop a three-year in-state advertising campaign strategy that supports Louisiana public postsecondary education statewide.
(Board of Regents, B)
10. Each Louisiana institution should evaluate its own Web site based upon good Web site development practices.
(Campus, A)
11. Develop a coordinated out-of-state marketing effort.

(Board of Regents, A)

12. Conduct a series of practical marketing workshops for the community and technical colleges and regional universities.
(Board of Regents, B)
13. Implement a Web-based service in Louisiana high schools to promote college attendance, support college selection, and assist students in identifying colleges and universities that best match their interests and abilities.
(Board of Regents, A)
14. Create a Board of Regents' newsletter specifically to "market" the new Master Plan internally.
(Board of Regents, B)
15. Phase out all external references to institutional tiers or groupings that are qualitative.
(Board of Regents, B)
16. Assist schools to develop best practices by highlighting successful marketing practices at similar schools.
(Board of Regents, B)
17. Continue the external public relations outreach to high schools, guidance counselors, and parents.
(Board of Regents, A)

Recruitment

18. Each campus should develop and successfully implement a comprehensive marketing/recruitment plan to prioritize and guide the effort complete with:
 - Goals
 - Key statistics
 - Action plans
 - Responsibility
 - Timelines
 - Budget
 - Evaluation(Campus, A)
19. Establish admissions criteria and procedures for the following groups that fall outside of the Master Plan: transfer students (required grade point average in crosswalk courses),

adults (age and requirements), out-of-state students (TOPS curriculum), and international students (TOEFL scores, grade point average).

(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, A)

20. Significantly expand the prospecting efforts to identify more potential students earlier in the selection process, and seriously consider building and distributing a centralized prospect database based upon the EPAS data.
(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, A)
21. Consistently collect and utilize comprehensive inquiry-level data in the marketing and recruitment process.
(Campus, A)
22. Systematically grade and qualify inquiries and train admissions staff on the use of these results to target their communication and use of time.
(Campus, B)
23. Implement segmented and sequential written communication flows for prospective students at each stage of the pre-enrollment process (e.g., inquiry, applicant, accept, confirmation).
(Campus, A)
24. Develop a more extensive telecounseling initiative using students, professional staff, faculty, and alumni
(Campus, A)
25. Improve the Web presence of every institution and develop better interfaces with the enrollment databases.
(Campus, A)
26. Provide admissions/recruitment with stronger computer support, regularize enrollment reporting, and increase the use of data and information in enrollment planning and decision-making.
(Campus, B)
27. Develop a long-term plan to train the admissions/marketing staff in state-of-the-art enrollment management practices.
(Campus, B)
28. Implement a territorial management model on every campus that provides for a single point of contact for each prospective student from point of inquiry through enrollment.
(Campus, B)
29. Merge admissions and recruitment/outreach functions as a means of improving efficiency and effectiveness.
(Campus, C)
30. Develop strong enrollment management committees on each campus to fully address enrollment issues.
(Campus, C)

31. Develop plans to further integrate marketing and technology functions into the enrollment management process on each campus.
(Campus, C)

Financial Aid

32. Study the impact of financial aid, both merit-based and need-based, on student recruitment and retention.
(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, A)
33. Research the enrollment behavior of non-resident students related to financial aid.
(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, A)
34. Eliminate unique institutional financial aid application forms.
(Campus, B)
35. Improve the technological capabilities of financial aid offices.
(Campus, B)
36. Combine scholarship and financial aid offices and cross-train admissions counselors in financial aid.
(Campus, B)
37. Seek ways to simplify administration of the TOPS program and provide earlier notification.
(Board of Regents, B)

Retention

38. Implement a campus-specific early-alert system that identifies students who are at risk.
- Determine incoming students' characteristics that predict likelihood to drop out
 - Design a systematic program involving faculty and staff that identifies students exhibiting behaviors that indicate possible problems within the first four weeks and on an ongoing basis
 - Design a proactive program to intervene with flagged students and provide structured ways to connect them with the appropriate resources on campus
- (Campus, A)
39. Explore technology options to support an early-alert program.
(Board of Regents, A)
40. Determine which courses are "killer courses" by identifying courses with fewer than 50 percent of the students who initially register for the course completing and passing the course with a grade of C or better.
(Campus, B)

41. Implement Supplemental Instruction (SI) for the designated “killer courses.”
(Campus, B)
42. Continue and expand efforts designed to improve the teaching/learning process at Louisiana public colleges and universities.
(Campus, A)
43. Consider offering incentives to students who complete 15 credits.
(Board of Regents, B)
44. Place a top priority on inclusion of faculty in all retention committees and discussions related to retention.
(Campus, A)
45. Create an ongoing series of development opportunities for faculty to learn about the importance of their role in improving retention and graduation rates.
(Systems, A)
46. Conduct a systematic and comprehensive review and recommend specific changes/modifications to the organization and delivery of academic advising services at each Louisiana public college and university.
(Campus, A)
47. Improve academic advising by implementing training for academic advisors in developmental advising, providing coordination/leadership for advising and systematically evaluating the organization and delivery of advising services.
(Campus, A)
48. Designate a director of retention on each campus who will have responsibilities for leadership and coordination activities related to the retention initiative.
(Campus, A)
49. Pilot a recruit-back program that can be enhanced during each of the next few academic years.
(Campus, A)
50. Find alternative ways to charge tuition and offer incentives to discourage “course shopping.”
(Board of Regents, B)
51. Explore creative programming options to accelerate degree-completion.
(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, B)
52. Formalize dual enrollment programs with local high schools.
(Board of Regents/Systems/Campus, A)
53. Engage the various college and university campuses in the development of a plan to improve quality service to students including:
 - Articulating a service mission statement

- Requesting that all offices review policies that are generally known to cause difficulties for students with an intent to revise them for purposes of streamlining processes for students, even if the change will mean a different operation in the office
- Implementing a quality-service training program that is a part of new staff orientation, but also continues on an ongoing basis for all staff

(Campus, A)

54. Conduct workshops with faculty so that they understand their role in service as it relates to the classroom experience and the learning process.

(Campus, A)

55. Empower front-line staff to be ambassadors of the institution, suggesting changes in operation that they see creating problems and advocating for appropriate exceptions for individual students.

(Campus, A)

56. Successfully implement a comprehensive retention planning process and develop a comprehensive institutionwide quality of student life and learning (retention) plan to prioritize and guide retention-related efforts complete with:

- Goals
- Key strategies
- Action plans
 - Description
 - Responsibility
 - Timelines
 - Budget
 - Evaluation

(Campus, A)

Information Technology

57. The Board of Regents should commission a feasibility study from a third party with higher education experience to explore system and/or regional data centers.

(Board of Regents/Systems, A)

58. Implement a structural organizational change in information technology that provides for direct accountability of the institutions' information technology directors to the systems' chief information officers.

(Board of Regents/Systems, A)

59. The state's new Postsecondary Education Information Technology Council should formulate policy and strategies which would facilitate and, in many cases, initiate

standardization of processes and procedures regarding information technology use. The council should also develop and strengthen information system interfaces between campuses, system offices, and the Regents.

(Board of Regents/Systems, A)

60. The Board of Regents should commission a study to determine the bandwidth requirements for public postsecondary education in Louisiana and develop a strategic plan for building the network infrastructure to deliver the required bandwidth.

(Board of Regents/Systems, A)

61. Invest in the equipment and software necessary to secure the institutions' information technology systems. Commission a third-party source to assess the security at the various campuses and conduct controlled security breach efforts to test the security of an institution's data and systems.

(Campus, A)

62. Implement and test disaster recovery plans at each institution and at the system. The disaster recovery plans and time to operation should be consistent with the objectives set forth in the strategic information technology plan.

(Campus, A)

63. Expand capability of Board of Regents Data Marts and OLAP data warehouse

(Board of Regents/Systems, B)

Capacity

64. Conduct a comprehensive space utilization/space inventory analysis systemwide.

(Board of Regents, A)

65. Effective immediately, initiate systemwide use of the "Survey of Space Utilization Standards and Guidelines in the Fifty States," as published by the California Postsecondary Education Commission or similar updated nationally-recognized space utilization standards.

(Board of Regents, A)

66. Effective immediately, integrate all systemwide enrollment management projections with any current or future systemwide campus master planning initiatives.

(Board of Regents, B)

67. Conduct an "Atmospherics Assessment" linked to the campus visit experience on a pilot project basis.

(Board of Regents, B)