



# LOSFA LOOP

July 2010 Edition

Volume 3-7

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

July 2010 is a very pivotal month in financial aid/college access. It's a date that we've all been anticipating since March 30, 2010 when President Barack Obama signed "The Healthcare and Education Reconciliation Act (HCERA) of 2010" which eliminated the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP). As you know, effective July 1, 2010, all federal post-secondary education loans will be made through the William D. Ford Direct Loan program.

Although this will be a transition for our student loan borrowers, I have the utmost confidence in my colleagues at our schools' financial aid offices to guide them through this process. As always, our office may be contacted for additional information at (800) 259-5626, ext. 1012 or via e-mail at [custserv@osfa.la.gov](mailto:custserv@osfa.la.gov). We've also updated our website, <http://www.osfa.la.gov/>, to reflect the changes brought about by HCERA. LOSFA has enjoyed being the designated guarantor of student loans that originated under FFELP in Louisiana for over forty five years and although we will not guarantee any new loans, we will continue to serve the education community of Louisiana via outreach, financial literacy training and the other financial aid programs that we administer.

July 2010 also brings about other changes within LOSFA. The name of our School and Lender Services (SLS) Section has been changed to Financial Literacy, Education and Training. They will continue to work collaboratively with the Louisiana Association of Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA), but also look to intensify their focus on financial literacy for Louisiana residents including increasing awareness of and participation in the START Saving Program.

I want to welcome the staff of Louisiana Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (LA GEAR UP) to the LOSFA family. We've always worked closely with LA GEAR UP and now, as administrators for the program, we look forward to

working in concert with LA GEAR UP staff to increase the number of low-income students in Louisiana who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. (Page 3)

With all of the transition within our industry and within our agency walls, we have not forgotten that July 1, 2010 is also a pivotal date for our 2010 high school graduates. I'm referring, of course, to the TOPS application deadline. I certainly hope that all of Louisiana's 2010 graduates planning to begin post-secondary education in the Fall ensured that LOSFA received their TOPS application by July 1st. Any 2010 graduate who missed the deadline can take solace in the fact that they may still be eligible to receive TOPS for a full eight semesters beginning with Fall 2011, provided they meet the other TOPS eligibility criteria.

Whether a 2010 graduate met the TOPS application deadline or, unfortunately, missed the deadline, They should still be excited about the prospect of post-secondary education. LOSFA is certainly excited about adapting to the multitude of changes and continuing to serve the students of Louisiana. Our adaptability is what has allowed us to thrive within an ever changing industry for over forty five years and grow to be Louisiana's First Choice for College Access.

-- Melanie

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## **LOSFA Outreach**

### **Spring 2010 Financial Aid Workshop**

LOSFA held the Spring 2010 Financial Aid Workshop on Wednesday, May 19, 2010 at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Attendees received information on federal student aid legislation, regulatory processes, financial education, default prevention, student retention and the year-round Pell Grant.

Lissa Powell, Regional Training Executive with Sallie Mae Services, provided the latest information from the U.S. Department of Education.

The day ended with LOSFA's School and Lender Services (SLS) section providing information on TOPS, Go Grant, Early Start and new outreach activities.

**Save the Date!**

**College Goal  
Sunday**

**2011**

**February 20**



## **LOSFA expanding college access services**

During the last few months, LOSFA's Executive Director, Melanie Amhrein, has been exploring business opportunities with other agencies, colleges and higher education financial aid entities, in an effort to expand LOSFA's ability to realize its vision of being Louisiana's First Choice for College Access.

The first of those opportunities has come to fruition. As of July 1, 2010, the Louisiana Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (LA GEAR UP) is being administered by LOSFA.

LA GEAR UP is a federally funded grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. LA GEAR UP provides six-year grants to states to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. Grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. LA GEAR UP funds are used to provide college scholarships to low-income students through the establishment of Rewards for Success accounts under the START Saving Program.

LA GEAR UP has its own federal funding, which includes administrative expenses.

LOSFA is currently exploring two other opportunities: assuming responsibility for the Louisiana Lifelong Learning Education Portal: Secondary to Postsecondary and Beyond (LA ePortal) and offering to pass-through any state funding that is available for Aid to Independent Institutions.

The LA ePortal is a web-based interface developed by the Board of Regents in partnership with the State Department of Education, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, LOSFA and other state entities to serve as an education and career planning tool. It provides users with information on how to prepare for college, including academic preparation, career readiness information and financial aid information.

The Aid to Independent Institutions is currently funded through the Board of Regents (BOR). BOR allocates state general funds to non-public institutions for the purpose of reimbursing the institutions for educating Louisiana's citizens. LOSFA is exploring the possibility of receiving any appropriations and distributing those funds to participating institutions.

Additionally, LOSFA has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Services/Office of Community Services (DSS/OCS) (Now the Department of Children and Family Services.) to administer the Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program.

The Chafee Program is a federally funded grant program designed to provide financial assistance to students who are, or were prior to age 18, in the foster care system and who are pursuing a postsecondary education in either a technical or academic program.

LOSFA's ability to provide a streamlined application process, requiring students to complete only the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), will be advantageous to students. Additionally, the agency's existing communication tools will simplify informing financial aid administrators about the Chafee Program.

Chafee ETVs are awarded to students aged 15-21 who are enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a postsecondary program. Students are eligible for renewal until age 23. Qualified students may receive up to \$5,000 each academic year.

## START Program changes

At its June meeting, the Executive Committee of the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority (LATTA) approved two emergency changes to the START Saving Program and started the rulemaking process to make these changes permanent.

The time an account owner has to make the initial deposit to an account has been extended from 60 days to 180 days. Prior to this change, if an account owner did not deposit at least \$10 within 60 days, the account was closed. LATTA members wanted to extend the initial deposit deadline in order to give owners sufficient time to effect payroll deductions, automatic debits and more time to transfer funds from other sources such as another state's 529 plan, Coverdell Education Savings Account, etc. Accounts with no deposit will now be closed after 180 days.

The deadline for account owners to provide tax information has been extended from December 31 to February 15.

START rules require account owners whose tax information is not available from the Louisiana Department of Revenue to provide tax documents that provide income information necessary for proper allocation of earnings enhancements. Earning enhancements, the state's match for annual deposits, are paid yearly, based on the account owner's federal adjusted gross income for the year preceding the year for which the deposits are made. The December deadline was causing some account owners to miss out on the level of earnings enhancements they could have received.

The new February deadline is designed to allow account owners more time to provide tax information.

The emergency rules and the notices of intent for rulemaking can be found at [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov) under the Information Center. Click the Frequently Requested Information link, then the Programs Rules and Notices of Intent. From there, choose the START Program Rules Section.

If you have a comment, please email [rules@osfa.la.gov](mailto:rules@osfa.la.gov) or send a letter to:

Melanie Amrhein, Executive Director  
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance Director  
P.O. Box 91202  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202



## LOSFA touts START Saving Program during state-wide media tour

In an effort to spread the word about LOSFA's START Saving Plan, David Roberts, Assistant Executive Director of Marketing and Outreach, spent a week on a media tour of the state. During the media tour, Roberts informed parents and custodians of Louisiana children about saving for college and how to earn a definite financial return on their investments despite the nation's unstable economy.

"It was great to travel throughout the state and tout the benefits of the START Saving Program. Knowledge about the plan among the media representatives ran the gamut from those who never heard about START to someone who covered the Louisiana Legislative session that established START. We hope to do many more tours to educate the citizens of Louisiana about START because it truly is the best way for a Louisiana resident to save for post secondary education," Roberts said.



Categorized as a Qualified Tuition Plan (QTP) under Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code, the START Saving program is an innovative college savings plan designed to help families contend with the growing costs of educating their children after high school. The program is administered by LOSFA, under the direction of the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority (LATTA), and offers tax advantages, including tax shelters for earnings and a state match of the deposits.

"This integral part of our media tour is to impress upon parents the immediate need to begin saving for their children's college education," Roberts says. "Many parents don't realize it, but if they start saving for college early enough, setting aside \$25 each month can possibly cover the cost of an education at a public, four-year university in Louisiana," Roberts added.

Roberts' tour took him to New Orleans, Hammond, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Shreveport, Monroe and Alexandria.

For information on starting an account, go to [www.startsaving.la.gov](http://www.startsaving.la.gov) or call (800) 259-5626, ext. 1012.

*David Roberts, Assistant Executive Director of Marketing and Outreach, appears on a noon news program in Monroe in an effort to spread the word about the START Saving program.*



### Links to samples of media coverage generated by START Media Tour

<http://www.thenewsstar.com/article/20100617/UPDATES01/100617011/-1/UPDATES>

<http://www.katc.com/gma/> -- on June 15, video in sidebar

<http://www.kplctv.com/Global/story.asp?S=12653555>

<http://www.thetowntalk.com/article/20100618/NEWS01/100618009/START+saving++Another+way+to+fund+college>

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION 2010 - BILLS PASSED AFFECTING ROLE, SCOPE, OR MISSION  
As of July 1, 2010**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Subject And Summary</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
1.	<b>Act 201</b> (SB 182)	Gautreaux, Adley Marionneaux, Murray, Riser and 7 Reps.	<b>TOPS:</b> Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, the amount to be applied to the cost of books and instructional materials for National Guard members will increase from \$150 per semester to \$300 per semester and the National Guard stipends will increase from \$200 to \$400 per semester for the Performance Award and from \$400 to \$800 per semester for the Honors Award. Provides the book and instructional materials allowance to TOPS Tech eligible students.	June 14, 2010
2.	<b>Act 647</b> (SB 486)	Nevers	<b>TOPS Tech:</b> Provides that beginning with the 2010-2011 school year a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system may be used as an alternative to the requirement to earn a composite score of 17 on the ACT.	July 1, 2010
3.	<b>Act 655</b> (SB 505)	L. Jackson	<b>GO Grant:</b> Establishes the program in statute and provides the basic eligibility criteria. The Board of Regents is responsible for establishing criteria for initial and continuing eligibility, the method for determining the award amount and other program criteria not included in the statute. The Commission is responsible for administering the program and promulgating rules to implement the statute.	June 29, 2010
4.	<b>Act 671</b> (SB 744)	Marionneaux	<b>START:</b> Clarifies that monies in a START account are not subject to attachment, levy, garnishment or legal process in favor of any creditor or claimant.	August 15, 2010
5.	<b>Act 724</b> (HB 1000)	Waddell	<b>TOPS:</b> Adds OPH students to those who can use their award at proprietary and cosmetology schools.	June 29, 2010
6.	<b>Act 758</b> (HB 1491)	Downs	<b>TOPS:</b> Requires completion of 19 units instead of 17.5, and makes the TOPS core similar to Core 4 and the Regents' Core beginning with 2014 graduates by deleting the ½ unit computer science requirement and adding one unit each of advanced math, advanced science and social studies.	June 29, 2010

**Legislation Impacting TOPS Appropriation**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Subject And Summary</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
7.	<b>Act 741</b> (HB 1171)	Tucker	<b>LA GRAD Act:</b> Allows colleges to increase tuition up to a total of 10% per year if they contract with the Board of Regents to put in place and meet certain performance standards and have the approval of the college's management board. TOPS will cover the amount of the increase, Note that a increase of up to 5% is already approved for 2010-11 and 2011-12.	June 29, 2010

## Louisiana joins The Alliance of States

Louisiana has joined Complete College America's Alliance of States and is ready to take bold action to significantly increase the number of students successfully completing college and achieving degrees and credentials with value in the labor market, as well as to closing attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.

### States' Commitment to College Completion

When it joined the Complete College America Alliance of States, Louisiana—in partnership with its colleges and universities—pledged to make college completion a top priority and committed to the following three actions:

#### Set Completion Goals

Establish annual state and campus-specific degree and credential completion goals through 2020

#### Develop Action Plans and Move Key Policy Levers

Develop and implement aggressive state and campus-level action plans for meeting the state's college completion goals, including strategies to:

- Ensure all students are ready to start and succeed in freshman credit courses.
- Redesign remediation efforts to substantially improve success.
- Increase the number of students completing on-time.
- Develop new, shorter and faster pathways to degrees and credentials of value in the labor market.
- Utilize available financial resources to provide incentives to students and colleges for progress and completion.

#### Collect and Report Common Measures of Progress

Use consistent data and progression measures to create a culture that values completion. This includes:

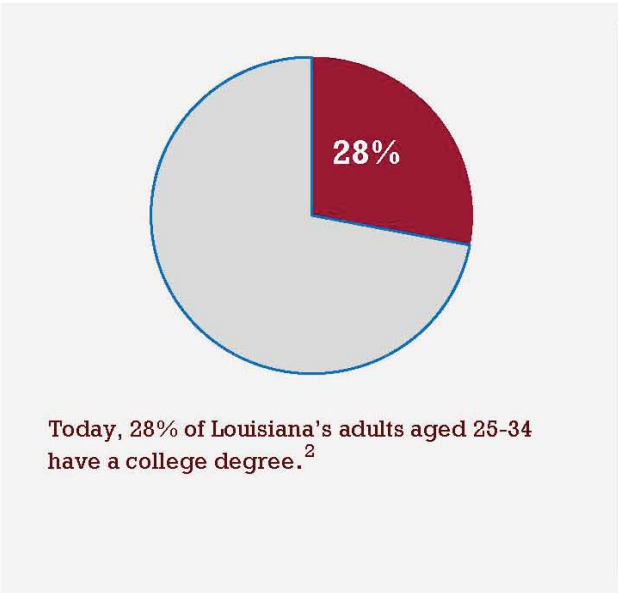
- Using common metrics for measuring and reporting progress.
- Publicly reporting year one benchmark data and annual progress on college completion, progression, transfer, job placement and earnings, and cost and affordability measures.
- Disaggregating data by level and type of degree/credential, age, race, and income.

For more information on the Alliance of States, contact Complete College America at (202) 349-4148 or email [info@completecollege.org](mailto:info@completecollege.org).



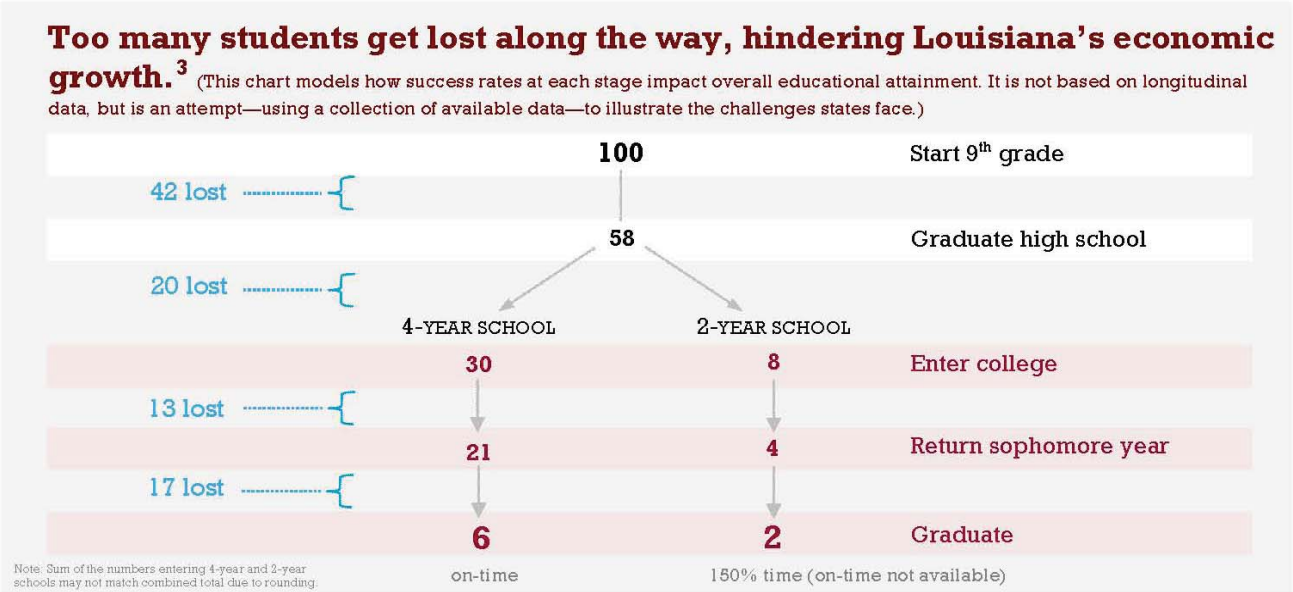
# Louisiana Alliance of States

By the end of this decade, more than 60% of jobs will require college education.<sup>1</sup>



**Job growth across the U.S., 2010-2020:**

High-growth jobs	Required education
Dental hygienist	Associate degree
Computer software engineer	Bachelor's degree
HVAC/refrigeration mechanic	Certificate
Physical therapist assistant	Associate degree
Network systems analyst	Bachelor's degree
Licensed practical nurse	Certificate



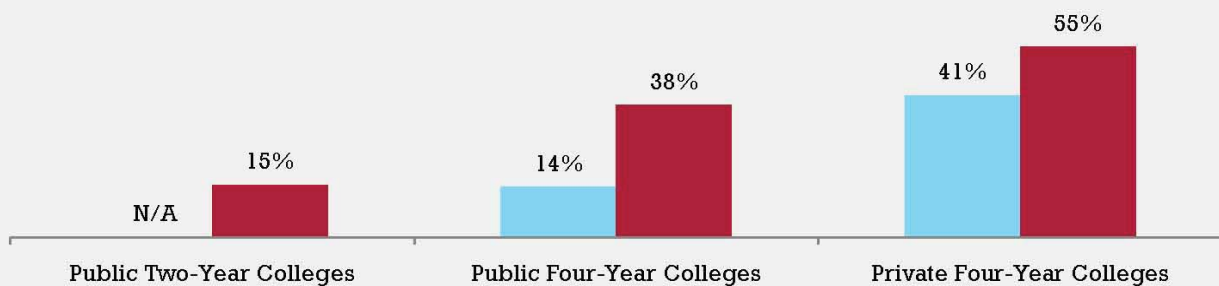


# Louisiana Graduation Rates

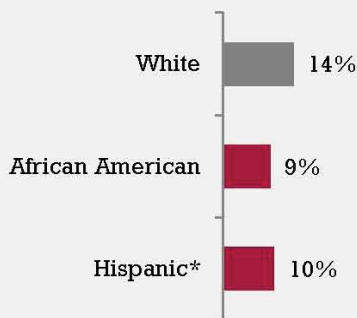
Louisiana must raise completion rates overall and place extra focus on closing the college attainment gap for underrepresented students.<sup>4</sup>

## Graduation Rates by Institution Type

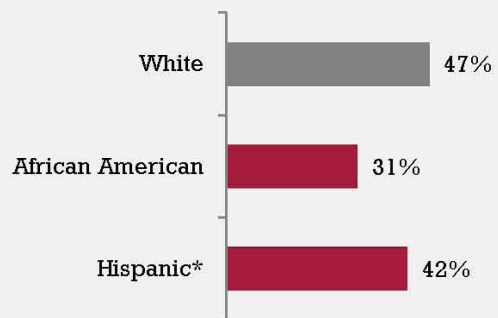
On-Time Within 150% of time



## Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity: Public 2-Year Colleges (150% time)



## Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity: Public & Private 4-Year Colleges (150% time)

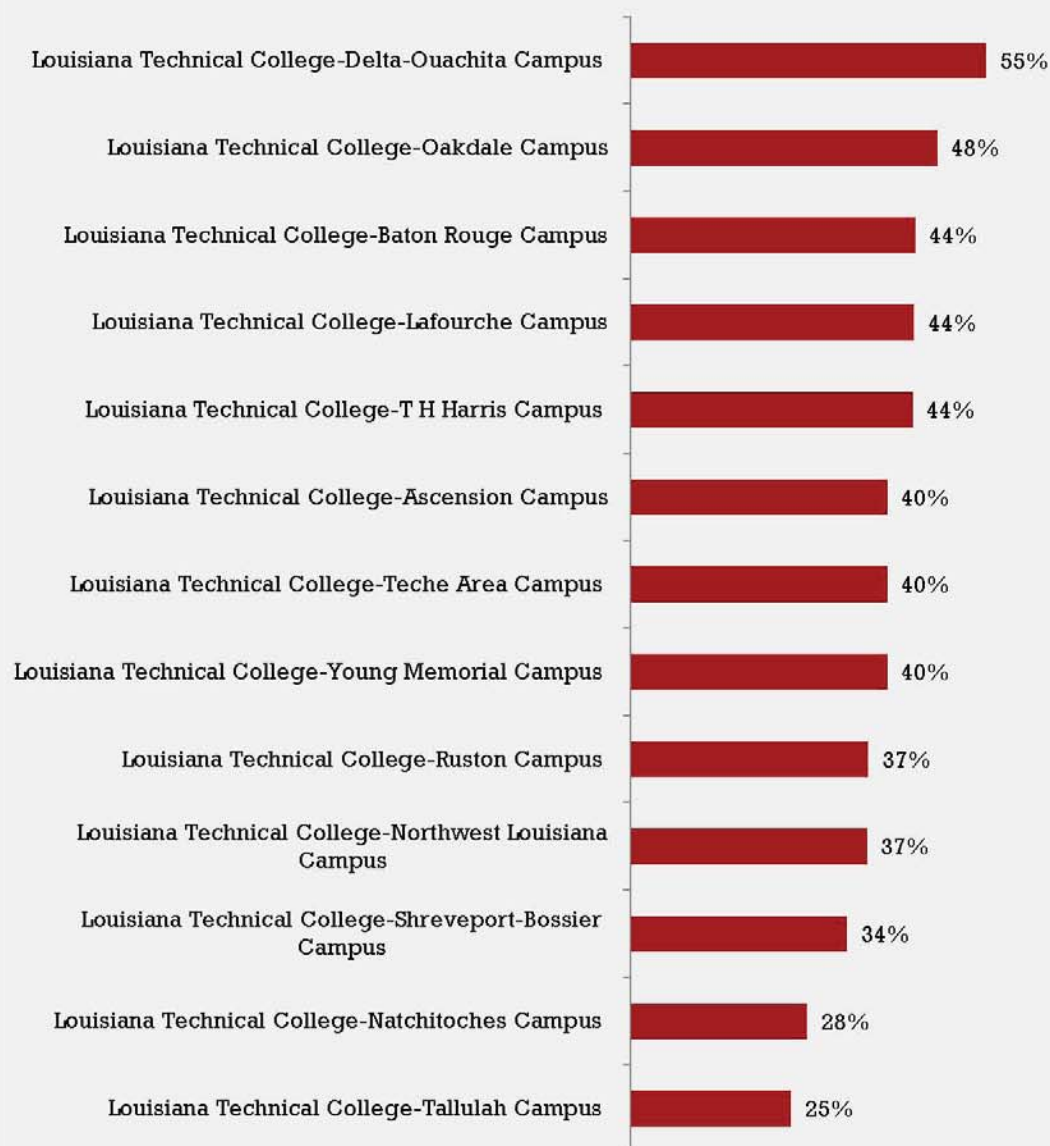


\* less than 3% of entering cohort

# Louisiana

## Graduation Rates by Campus

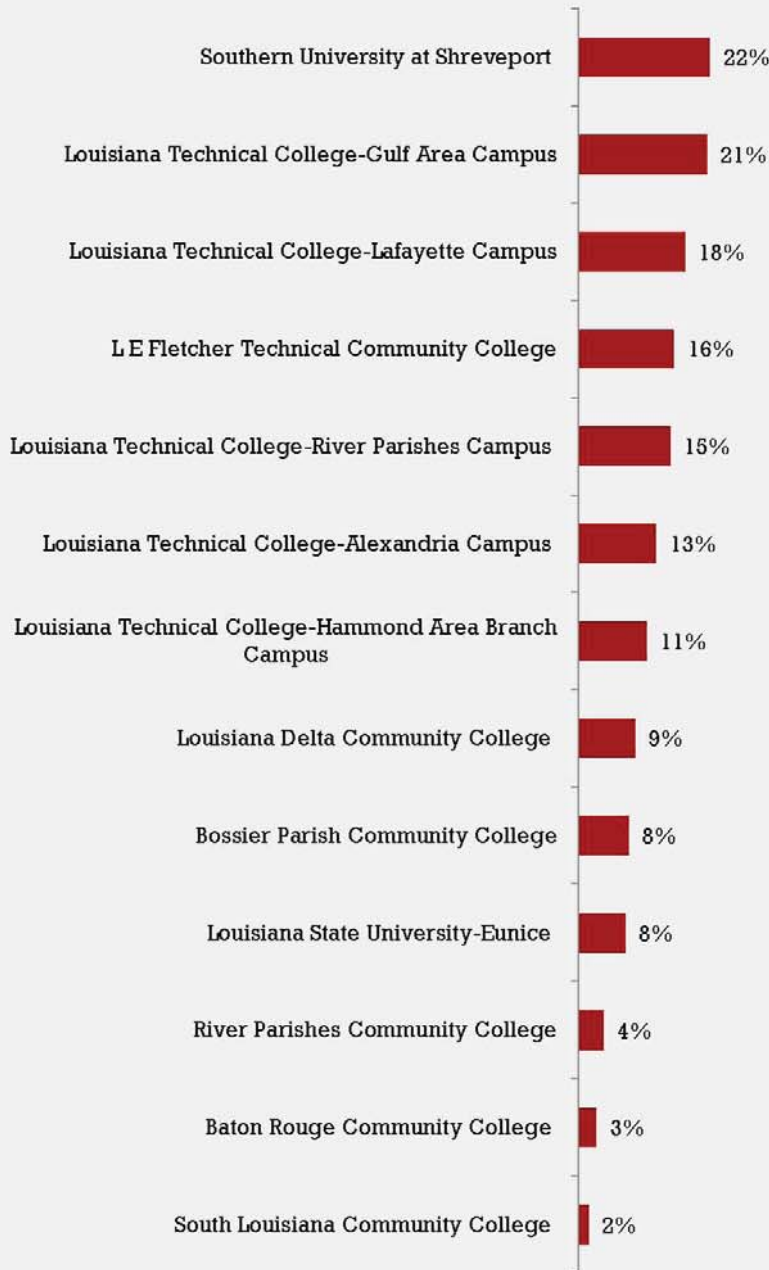
### Public Two-Year Colleges (150% time)



# Louisiana

## Graduation Rates by Campus

### Public Two-Year Colleges, Cont.

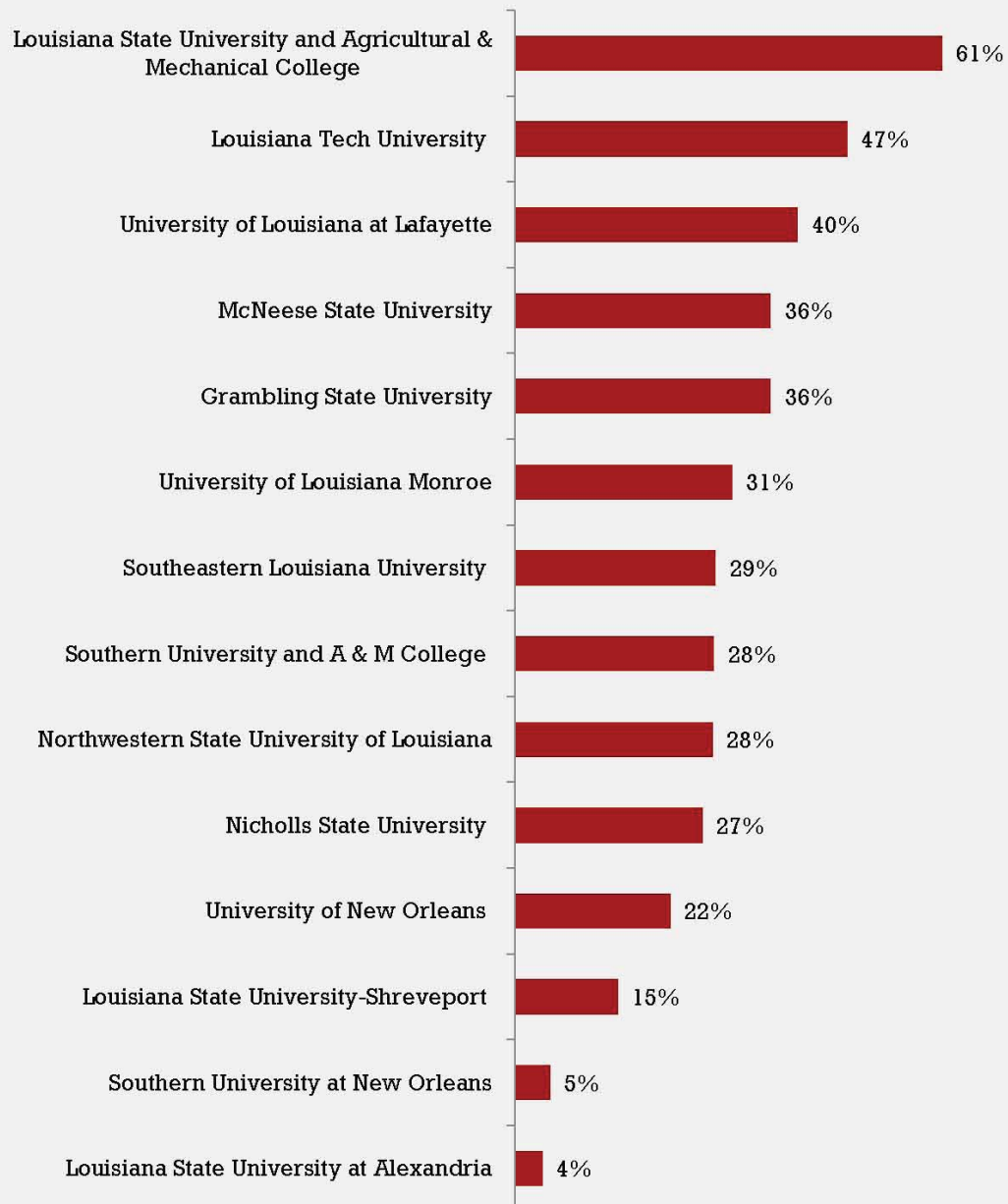


Reported by institutions to NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Graduation rates for two-year colleges are for first-time, full-time students completing certificate or degree within 150% of normal program time. Source: U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS 2007-08 Graduation Rate File; gr2008 Early Release Data File Downloaded 11-05-09; aggregated by NCHEMS.

# Louisiana

## Graduation Rates by Campus

### Public Four-Year Colleges (150% time)

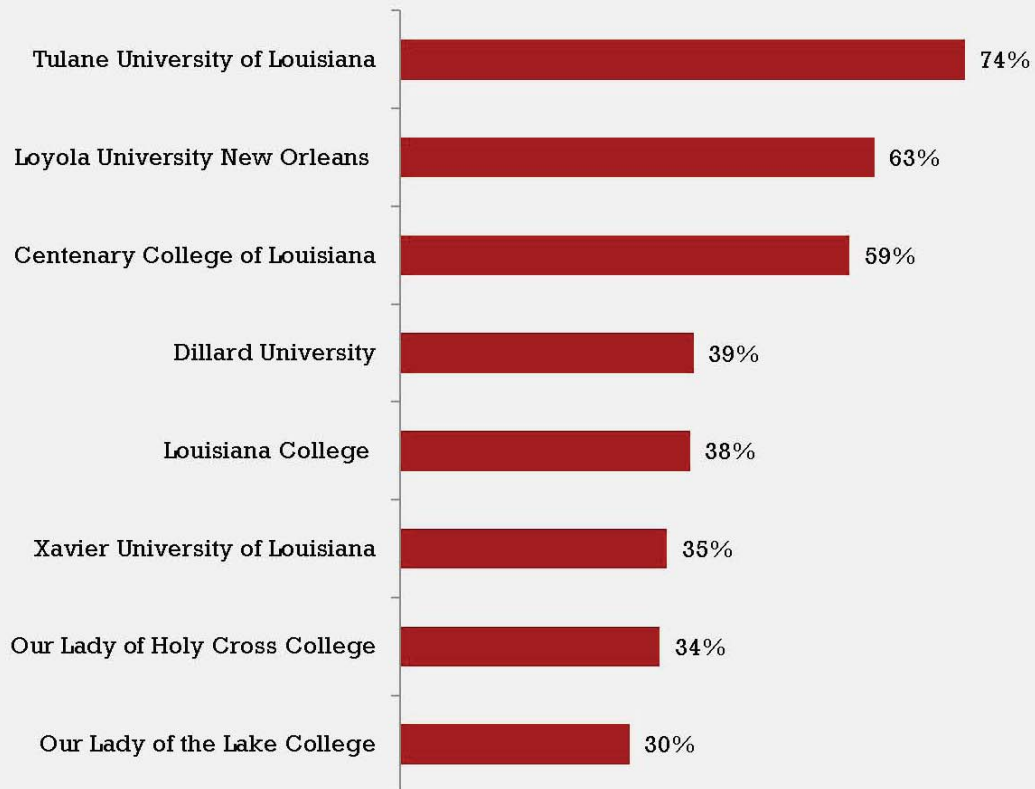


Reported by institutions to NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Graduation rates are for first-time, full-time students completing a bachelor's or equivalent degree within six years. Source: U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS 2007-08 Graduation Rate File; gr2008 Early Release Data File Downloaded 11-08-09; aggregated by NCHEMS.

# Louisiana

## Graduation Rates by Campus

### Private Four-Year Colleges (150% time)



Reported by institutions to NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Graduation rates are for first-time, full-time students completing a bachelor's or equivalent degree within six years. Source: U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS 2007-08 Graduation Rate File; gr2008 Early Release Data File Downloaded 11-05-09; aggregated by NCHEMS.

# Louisiana

## A Note about Graduation Rates

The graduation rates presented here are based on data reported by institutions to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). These rates reflect the percentage of first-time, full-time students who complete within 150% of normal program time. (Graduation rates for part-time students are typically much lower.) These data do not capture the graduation rates of transfer students—including those who begin at colleges with some credits already accumulated—or part-time students. Many states have or are developing longitudinal data systems that would be able to measure the graduation rates of all students, including part-time and transfer students.

The IPEDS data are presented here because they are the only nationally available and comparable graduation rates. Complete College America believes that states should make the improvement of data systems to more accurately measure completion rates—and the annual public reporting of those rates—a top priority.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carnevale, T., Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2009. High-growth fields based on national projections of total new and replacement jobs. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/research/jobs/79012.html>

<sup>2</sup> "College degree" means an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or higher. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), 2008 (from U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample File.) <http://www.higheredinfo.org/>

<sup>3</sup> **The pipeline is a model for illustrative purposes and is not based on longitudinal data.** Pipeline data aggregated by NCHEMS: reflects high school graduation rates, college-going rates, college retention rates, and college graduation rates (using the most recent data available for each metric). For the high school graduation rate, NCHEMS uses NCES Common Core Data and divides high school graduates into 9<sup>th</sup> graders four years earlier. Future revisions will incorporate the cohort-based HS graduation rates that conform to the definitions of the NGA Graduation Compact (for states where those data are available), which are more accurate than the current ratio. The pipeline represents the number of students who graduate from high school within four years, enter college the immediate following fall, return for their sophomore year the following year, and graduate from college. Two-year college graduation rates reflect credentials earned within 150% of expected program time, and include certificates awarded for programs of less than two years; two years but less than four years; and associate degrees. Four-year graduation rates reflect **on-time completers** of bachelor's or equivalent degrees (**within four years**). The data do not account for transfers across institutions. <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=72>

<sup>4</sup> Aggregated by NCHEMS from IPEDS 2007-08 Graduation Rate File; gr2008 Early Release Data File, downloaded 11-05-09. Graduation rates are reported by institutions to NCES based on adjusted cohort of first-time, full-time students. Two-year graduation rates include certificates completed within 150% of normal program time in addition to associate degrees completed within three years. IPEDS does not report two-year (or "on-time") completion rates for two-year colleges. Graduation rates by race aggregated by NCHEMS from IPEDS 2006-07 Graduation Rate File. Graduation rates for Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students are included only if those populations represent greater than 5% of the adjusted cohort. Disaggregated graduation rates are excluded for populations with an adjusted revised cohort size of less than 30, even if that cohort represents greater than 5% of the total entering cohort. Note that 2008 overall graduation rates may be higher than rates reflected in the disaggregated data from 2007 based on differences in graduation rates between years. In each instance, "Private" refers to private not-for-profit institutions only. Graduation rates by campus are presented for Title IV, degree-granting institutions with an adjusted revised cohort greater than 30.



## LOSFA's Social Media



<http://www.facebook.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.twitter.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.youtube.com/LOSFA1000>



[www.Flickr.com/LOSFA](http://www.Flickr.com/LOSFA)



<http://www.louisianatopsprogram.com/>



For more information, contact the  
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance:

By Phone: 800-259-5626, Ext. 1012

By E-mail: [custserv@osfa.la.gov](mailto:custserv@osfa.la.gov)

By Mail: P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202

Web Address: [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov)

For submissions, opinions or comments for LOSFA LOOP, please  
contact David Roberts at [droberts@osfa.la.gov](mailto:droberts@osfa.la.gov).