

Regents Tracks Graduates to Work

During its meeting today, the Board of Regents released its first report tracking Louisiana's higher education graduates into the workforce. The 2011 Employment Outlook Report analyzes employment data from the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Board of Regents to determine the number of completers working in Louisiana six months and eighteen months after graduation. "This report is a starting point that will eventually assist our colleges and universities in maximizing their success and improving Louisiana's economy," said Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell. "We hope to have information from other agencies including the Department of Revenue by next year to allow us to draw an even more complete picture in the future."

The major findings of the report include:

- Eighteen months after graduation, 73% of associate degree completers were employed in Louisiana compared to 50% of bachelor's degree recipients.
- Eighteen months after graduation, bachelor's degree completers earned an average salary of \$32,742, compared to \$35,544 for associate degree completers. Data from studies in other states affirm this pattern but indicate that, by the fifth year, bachelor's degree recipients will have a higher income.

The following fields of study had the highest average calculated salaries:

-Engineering (\$56,853)

-Health professions (\$46,537)

-Engineering technologies (\$43,787)

-Education (\$37,639)

-Computer & Information Sciences (\$34,238)

"This report clearly shows that if we better educate Louisiana's residents they will participate in this state's economy at a much higher rate," said Commissioner of Higher Education Jim Purcell. "To me, this is encouraging because it proves that we can raise our own economy by improving our success."

"In 2010, Georgetown University looked at labor reports and projected for each state what its workforce will look like in 2018. That report projected 51% of jobs in Louisiana will require some postsecondary credential," said Commissioner Purcell. "We are at a turning point. Louisiana must decide whether to do a better job at diversifying and expanding its economy by educating its people or serve as a conveniently located source for cheap labor."