

EDITORIAL

Today is all about higher education opportunities here

Repeatedly, study after study has pointed to a great need in Shreveport-Bossier City that until this time has remained significantly underserved — opportunities for advanced higher education degrees.

And today, after many years of attempts to have a doctoral degree approved for LSU-Shreveport, the last hurdle is here as the Board of Regents meets to vote on final approval for a proposed doctorate of education in leadership studies. Getting to this point has been thanks to the hard work and efforts of many here in our part of the state, as well as elsewhere. We especially appreciate the efforts of Regents Chairman Bubba Rasberry, of Shreveport, who has been key in making this idea blossom into a reality along with the LSU System. All the work has been done. Now, the ultimate decision lies in the hands of Rasberry and the rest of the Regents.

Of course, gratitude is also owed to the Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education. As cheerleader, lobbyist and facilitator, SBBA continues to work toward keeping the community focused on higher education initiatives.

“The SBBA took it up about six weeks ago as one of our projects, and our members organizations have been advocating for it,” Johnette Magnier, executive director of SBBA, said in a recent email. “Our belief is that any program that can bring improvements in teaching and school management is needed and welcomed.”

Representatives of SBBA will be on hand during today’s meeting in demonstration of the community support behind the creation of this LSUS doctoral program.

We also stand with SBBA because we believe the key to the further economic development and growth in northwest Louisiana lies in expanding higher education opportunities for our diverse population. Last year, a study completed by Eva Klein & Associates firm, of Virginia, reinforced that the demand is here and recommended drastic changes in the local higher education offerings. The final outcome of that study was an initiative that came up during the 2012 Legislature to merge LSUS with Louisiana Tech. Although that merger effort ultimately failed, it did demonstrate to our elected officials in Baton Rouge that northwest Louisiana is very interested (and serious) about growing advanced higher education here.

Simply put, this move is vital for the future of Shreveport-Bossier City and key to ensuring a better, more expansive future for LSUS as a source of advanced higher education opportunities for the entire region.

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