

Continuing Education

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Higher Education Quote of the Week:

"I saw what was going on at the Convention Center, at the Superdome - terrible suffering - and I broke down and started to cry. I told Margie (my wife), I'm going to fail. I'm not going to be able to do what needs to be done. I don't know what to do. This University has been in existence for 171 years, and I will be the one to let it down." -
Retiring Tulane President Dr. Scott Cowen describing his initial reaction to Hurricane Katrina

Dear Johnette,

This week's bragging rights clearly go to our own Northwestern State University in Natchitoches. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) ranked Northwestern #4 in the nation for preparing elementary school teachers for the classroom.

The NCTQ ranked 1,612 programs, and conferred top status to only 26 of the schools. LSU in Baton Rouge also made the top 10 - with a #6 ranking - and Louisiana was named a "Standout State" in early reading and elementary content. **[For more on the rankings click here.](#)**

Phyllis Taylor, who is widely viewed as the most ardent defender of the TOPS program, recently told The Advocate Editorial Board that she believes it may be time for some changes to the program. Taylor, who fought changes during this most recent legislative session, said the rising cost of TOPS may make it necessary to raise standards, introduce a needs-based component, and decouple the award from the cost of tuition. The Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) is named after her late husband. **[The Advocate, 06.16.14](#)**

Shreveport-Bossier Higher Education News

- Argile Smith, the interim President of Louisiana College, said he wants to provide more transparency and stability to the campus until a new President is selected, which will not be him. "I felt that I would be glad to help, but I do not want to be the permanent President." **[Monroe News-Star, 06.15.14](#)**

Louisiana Higher Education News

- While making no strong commitments, U.S. Senator and GOP gubernatorial hopeful David Vitter recently suggested he is open to changes in TOPS and is a supporter of Common Core. "I don't think Common Core standards mandate a federal curriculum," said Vitter at the Baton Rouge Press Club. **[NOLA.com, 06.17.14](#)**
- Vitter's refusal to condemn Common Core may not sit



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well, however, with Bob Reid, the spokesperson for the Tea Party of Louisiana. In a letter mailed to Governor Jindal and posted on the group's website Sunday, Reid wrote that Common Core is the "crown jewel for the final part of the Communist takeover of America from within." **[Tea Party of Louisiana Website](#)**

- The Louisiana Board of Regents has officially begun its search for a new Commissioner of Higher Education. Meanwhile, former Commissioner of Education Jim Purcell has landed the top higher ed job in Rhode Island, **[Shreveport Times, 06.17.14](#)**
- Some tough choices are ahead for a committee tasked with determining which programs should be cut at the University of New Orleans. Layoffs are expected to follow these decisions. Dwindling state funds coupled with declining enrollment in recent years have left the school with no choice but to continue making cuts. UL System President Sandra Woodley said, the plan is "crucial for the future success" of the school. **[NOLA.com, 06.17.14](#)**

National Higher Education News

- Starbucks is joining forces with Arizona State University to provide tuition reimbursement for employees taking online courses. The move is aimed at improving employee satisfaction and retention. **[The Wall Street Journal, 06.17.14](#)**

For more information on higher education in Northwest Louisiana, please visit our website at www.sbba4he.org

Sincerely,

***Johnette Magner, Ph.D., Executive Director
Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education***

You are welcome to forward this newsletter to others in your network who are interested in higher education.

For more information on becoming a member of the SBBA, or providing direct support for our work, please contact Dr. Johnette Magner at jmagner@sbba4he.org

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