



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE EVALUATION OF SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATION

The program that allows each member of the 16-member Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors to award up to 20 scholarships a year does not have specific criteria to evaluate the applicants, according to a report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

The Board of Supervisors is made up of 15 members and one student member.

The informational audit by Purpera's Financial Audit Services section said that "in contrast to the other LSU scholarships tested, the Board of Supervisors Scholarship program's primary determining factors of academic excellence, special talent and financial need are not defined by specific criteria."

In addition, the report stated, "documentation provided by the Board of Supervisors Office did not indicate which determining factor(s) were met by award recipients. Without specific criteria or documentation, we could not determine what guidelines were used" to award the board scholarships.

The state auditor's report also found that information contained in a report LSU submitted to the Legislature in 2013 "was not accurate and complete." The report to lawmakers said the board awarded 190 tuition exemptions in the 2012-13 academic year, but after the auditors inquired about the report, the number was revised to 207, worth about \$1.4 million. A total of 226 board scholarships were handed out in the 2013-14 school year.

All of the scholarships awarded by LSU A&M "contains specific criteria that students must meet to be considered eligible," which are outlined in the campus catalog each year, "excluding the Board of Supervisors Scholarships," the state auditor said.

For the board scholarships, there are established minimum grade-point requirements but "no indication that these minimums were intended to measure academic excellence. The program regulations also do not provide any criteria for special talent and financial need."

Of the 28 board scholarships reviewed, 13 recipients had a GPA of 3.0 or better with the highest being 4.0. Eleven of the 28 had less than a 3.0 average, with one recipient having a 2.38 grade-point average. "Documentation of GPA verification from the Office of Student Financial Aid was not maintained for four of the 28 recipients," according to the report.



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The report also cited LSU for not having a standard procedure for board members to review applications of potential scholarship recipients, with no way to log all applications as they are received, a deficiency which increases the risk that an application may not be considered. Also, no vote of the board is taken to approve the scholarships awarded by individual board members, according to the report.

There is no formal written policy to keep the Board of Supervisors scholarship applications on file, although the award recipients' applications are kept on file for five years, and the applications from unsuccessful applicants are retained only for the existing academic year.

LSU's report to lawmakers on July 25, 2013 contained data on 190 scholarship recipients, but auditors identified 17 LSU A&M recipients not in the report and three students in the report who did not actually receive a scholarship.

The report included a recommendation that the Board of Supervisors Office create specific criteria to define the scholarship's determining factors and document the determining factor(s) met by each student awarded a scholarship. Besides recommending better record-keeping for scholarships, the report also recommended that LSU "develop better procedures to ensure that the report submitted to the Legislature . . . is accurate and complete."

For more information, contact:

Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor
225-339-3800

On Twitter: LSU Board scholarships do not have specific criteria to evaluate applicants.