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THE UL SYSTEM’S NINE UNIVERSITIES LAUD GOVERNOR JINDAL’S SUPPORT OF THE WORKFORCE AND INNOVATION FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY (WISE) PLAN

BATON ROUGE – Today, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal announced his support of the Workforce and Innovation for a Stronger Economy (WISE) plan that calls for stable funding for higher education and the creation of a $40 million performance-based fund tied to workforce needs and innovation.

Below are statements by University of Louisiana System President Sandra K. Woodley and the presidents of all nine UL System universities on the Governor’s announcement.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM PRESIDENT SANDRA K. WOODLEY
“In the University of Louisiana System, there is a deep sense of responsibility and urgency to increase the pace at our nine universities to meet growing workforce demands and to achieve national competitiveness. We are greatly appreciative of Governor Jindal’s support of the WISE plan and are committed to leveraging these new dollars, engaging in unprecedented collaboration across higher education systems, and enhancing our partnerships with business and industry to drive economic development.”

GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT FRANK POGUE
“This commitment from the governor is wonderful news for students and higher education in the state. Being able to plan for the next academic year and beyond with stable funding is nothing more than absolutely exciting, and the commitment to allow campuses to retain the revenue generated from student tuition is an important development. The $40 million for all of higher education provides a good opportunity for Grambling State University and others to consider ways we can connect university needs to specific state priorities and better meet student needs. This is a good day for higher education in Louisiana, its deserving students and employees.”

LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT LESLIE K. GUAGE
“Louisiana Tech is excited about contributing to the WISE plan and the opportunities it will create for both our graduates and our State. I believe WISE will ultimately result in opportunities for our best and brightest graduates to remain in-state and to use their skills and talents to build a stronger Louisiana for all of us.”
MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT PHILIP C. WILLIAMS
“Governor Jindal’s Executive Budget provides universities with the current level of state support in addition to giving the universities tuition revenue that will strengthen academic and student support initiatives. The creation of the WISE Fund is a commitment by the Governor to directly connect higher education to Louisiana’s economic development efforts, and it will allow McNeese to further develop innovative partnerships with existing and emerging industries and businesses in Southwest Louisiana.”

NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT BRUCE T. MURPHY
“I am very encouraged by news of Gov. Jindal’s WISE plan. Nicholls State University will certainly utilize this dedicated source of funding to grow our unique academic programs and create new ones that meet the workforce development needs of our region. Nicholls has a longstanding history of working with industry partners to produce highly skilled graduates in unique, high demand areas including culinary arts, geomatics, nursing, maritime management, marine biology and petroleum engineering and technology safety management.”

NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT RANDALL WEBB
“Northwestern State University is encouraged by the WISE plan, which will help us strengthen our academic and student support programs to meet the state’s workforce development demands. Northwestern State has been working with partners in a number of industries to align our programs with their needs for several years, and we look forward to enhancing these relationships to help Louisiana grow.”

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT JOHN CRAIN
“We are very appreciative of Governor Jindal’s support, for establishment of the WISE plan and collective efforts to stabilize funding for higher education. We look forward to the opportunity to continue expanding Southeastern’s strong partnerships and commitment to workforce and economic development in our region.”

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE PRESIDENT E. JOSEPH SAVOIE
“The University of Louisiana at Lafayette favors the WISE Fund opportunities. UL Lafayette has been establishing public-private partnerships, we’ve been committed to economic development, and our university is among the top 10 in the U.S. for the percentage of NSF research expenditures funded by business. This new $40 million investment by the state is a positive step to foster further innovation by higher education.”
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT MONROE PRESIDENT NICK J. BRUNO
“I appreciate the Governor’s plan to stabilize higher education funding in the upcoming budget. I also look forward to ULM participating in the WISE Fund initiative.”

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS PRESIDENT PETER J. FOS
“The University of New Orleans is thankful for Governor Jindal’s support of higher education and the WISE fund. WISE will provide much needed resources for our programs of excellence in engineering, computer science and accounting, while enabling the university to continue to support the humanities and other academic programs, including education. The WISE funding will ensure that the University of New Orleans, a community asset, will maintain and strengthen its relationships with industry and the private sector.”

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ABOUT THE UL SYSTEM: The largest higher education system in Louisiana, the University of Louisiana System enrolls 90,000 students at Grambling State University, Louisiana Tech University, McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and the University of New Orleans. For more information about the UL System visit www.ulsystem.edu.