Dear Johnette,

As more high-skilled, high-wage jobs move to Louisiana, the pressure is on higher education institutions around the state to produce graduates ready to fill them. We are still far from having enough skilled workers, but graduation statistics released this week show we are at least headed in the right direction.

LSU in Baton Rouge, the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, and Bossier Parish Community College all graduated their largest classes in history. At LSU, their entire 2014 class also had 10% more Hispanics, 10% more African Americans, and 3.5% more females than the previous year.

Among the BPCC graduates were 13 engineering majors, the first engineering cohort to graduate from the community college. These students are all eligible to transfer as juniors to Louisiana Tech or ULL. For more on the BPCC graduates click here.

Shreveport-Bossier Higher Education News

- LSUS Debate Professor Trey Gibson wrote in the Shreveport Times about the value of debate skills. "I believe the vaccine for our educational system is to have our local and state leaders implement competitive debate training in our schools." Shreveport Times, 05.18.14

Louisiana Higher Education News

- Despite overwhelming agreement among legislators that spending on the TOPS program is growing too fast, the legislature once again refused to take any steps to rein in the costs. The Associated Press, 05.19.14
- NOLA.com writer Jarvis DeBerry writes that there is plenty of evidence suggesting changes to TOPS are appropriate. "If 40 percent of freshman TOPS recipients can't maintain the grades to keep the scholarship, that's convincing evidence that the state shouldn't keep throwing good money at average." NOLA.com.
National Higher Education News

- The federal government is proposing a "gainful employment" rule which would require schools to do a better job of preparing students for employment or risk losing federal student aid. These changes are expected to impact for-profit colleges the most. Although for-profit colleges only enroll about 9% of the college students in this country, their loans account for about half of the defaults. *Huffington Post, 05.14.14*

For more information on higher education in Northwest Louisiana, please visit our website at [www.nbba4he.org](http://www.nbba4he.org)

Sincerely,

*Johnnette 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. Johnnette Magner at jmagner@sbba4he.org