

**Nicholls State University**

**Review of  
Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)**

**November 28, 2001**

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An audit of the TOPS Scholarship Program at Nicholls State University was performed by the Internal Auditor for fiscal year 2000-2001.

The objectives of this audit were:

- To determine if the University processed all TOPS awards in accordance with established guidelines of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA),
- To determine if internal controls are in place and are operating satisfactorily,
- To determine if the University adhered to its responsibilities mandated by state law in regards to the processing of TOPS awards, and
- To determine if adequate controls and procedures are in place to ensure the correct processing of TOPS awards to prove that the University receives the correct payment from LOSFA.

The audit consisted of reviewing state and university policy and procedures related to the processing of TOPS to obtain a working knowledge of their content. It was then determined if the University processed all of the various TOPS awards in accordance with the established policy and procedures and to see if the University adhered to its responsibilities as mandated by State law in regard to the processing of TOPS awards. Observations and inquiries were made to accomplish the audit's objectives as stated above.

Specifically, a representative sample of TOPS awards was reviewed to ensure that the payments received from LOSFA were the actual awards posted to student accounts. In my various samples it was ensured that students are not awarded TOPS when on academic probation the prior semester or term. Also, in this review it was ensured that any payments received in error were returned to LOSFA in a timely manner. Checked the cumulative payment roster to look for duplicate payments. Ensured the academic status of transfer students sampled prior to awarding of TOPS at this institution by obtaining and reviewing a copy on file of transcript from the school transferred from. Ensured that the student accounts sampled were credited within the timeframe set forth by LOSFA's rules. Ensured that duties are adequately segregated in regard to the processing of TOPS. Determined if controls are in place at this university to ensure that students are not awarded TOPS for more periods than allowed by the program.

Based on the procedures referred to in the previous paragraph, no matters were found that required disclosure in this report. It appears that Nicholls State University does have adequate internal controls in place to ensure that TOPS are awarded to eligible students with applicable criteria. All samples tested ensured that the awards are properly recorded, reported, and reconciled.

Amanda Fremin, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, and her staff should be commended on a job well done in maintaining the TOPS program.