Future role of decree uncertain

By CARL REDMAN and KAREN DIDIER
Capitol news bureau

When the consent decree for desegregating higher education expires at the end of 1987, Louisiana's four public universities will have received more than $200 million for enhancement of facilities, faculty and programs — all in the name of desegregation.

The black campuses will be home of more than 60 new academic programs officials hope will lure white students, and white campuses will be using special scholarships and other programs to attract black students and faculty.

Although some efforts at integrating races on college campuses are working, others are not. No one is certain what will happen in December 1987 when the federal court reviews Louisiana's success at implementing the consent decree.

Implementation of the decree has not come without complaints and problems. The black universities have occasionally charged the state is not giving them enough money to start new programs on solid ground, while black campus officials have said the court is being too lenient.

Last year, Nicholls State University complained that Southern University was sending buses into the Terrebonne area and shifting to Baton Rouge black students who might have been attracted to the Thibodaux campus. Also last year, students at the University of Louisiana at Monroe received reviews at Southern's Medical Center in New Orleans, where the quality of education at SUNO was said to be inferior to that at UNO.

Southern University Chancellor Wesley McClure is quick to note the state has cut both the general appropriations and some construction funds in the past two years. These cuts, he said, are not signs of a "good faith" effort.

However, the state's top educator feels there's hope a new administration has delayed startup a year, he added, "I just wish we had done that before."

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