MISSION

The University of Louisiana at Monroe seeks students who find value in our programs and prepares them to compete, succeed, and contribute in an ever-changing global society through a transformative education.

VISION

The University of Louisiana at Monroe will be recognized among the best-performing regional universities in the South.
July 31, 2015

For two years, the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) has been operating under a five-year strategic plan to guide the efforts of its students, faculty, staff, and administrators. These efforts are directed toward ULM being recognized among the best-performing regional universities in the South by 2018. This document summarizes our second year’s work and the implementation status of our strategies, in keeping with my commitment to transparency and accountability.

As a reminder to everyone, we have repeated our mission, vision, core values, and guiding principles so that these foundational elements remain fresh in everyone’s memory.

The report’s next section highlights some of the year’s more significant accomplishments. ULM was recognized for its quality academic programs a number of times last year, but reaching Tier I status in US News and World Report’s rankings of regional universities in the South was noteworthy. Additionally, our decision last year to create eULM and a new infrastructure to focus on online education paid off with ULM achieving recognition as the #1 online university in Louisiana. Two other highlights are important but not easily seen: eULM’s new tuition structure increased revenues by $1 million and $10.3 million—a 187% increase from the previous year—was raised in donations secured by our development officers and others. The former action helped stabilize our operating budget after six years of decreasing state appropriations. The latter added new scholarships to attract the best students and new endowments to attract and support the best faculty. The last highlight transformed the campus visually and improved our infrastructure. The $1 million Liew Family International Student Center was opened in April 2015 and provides a short-stay facility for newly-arrived students from other countries as well as a focal point for activities involving international students. The Center is unique within Louisiana and will serve the university well for years to come as we seek to increase our international student population.

This report’s last section summarizes the progress made to date in achieving our four strategies’ long-term objectives, and I am pleased that we are on-track with the plan’s timeline. Read this section of the report carefully, and I feel you will be impressed by how much has been accomplished before we are even half-way through our planning period.

Two years into our strategic plan, we are making progress toward a vision where we are recognized as a top-performing regional university in the South. ULM’s status as the most underrated university in Louisiana may not last much longer because word is getting out about our quality academic programs, supportive faculty and staff, attractive campus, and varied student life. That message is reaching and registering with more students and their parents. Alumni and supporters are connecting with the university in greater numbers and giving generously. The strategic plan is a campus-wide initiative and provides an opportunity for every member of our campus to contribute to its success and sustained growth.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nick J. Bruno
President
CORE VALUES

As students and members of ULM’s faculty and/or staff, we desire these values at all times.

• ACADEMIC FREEDOM:
  We believe that freedom in teaching and research is critical to ULM’s mission.

• DIVERSITY:
  We value and respect differences because we are enriched by a broad range of ideas and perspectives.

• EXCELLENCE:
  We uphold high standards.

• INTEGRITY:
  We commit to honesty, truthfulness, and rightness of action.

• SCHOLARSHIP:
  We pursue the expansion of knowledge through teaching, research, and creative works.

• SERVICE:
  We pledge to be courteous, respectful, and positive in our interactions with others, anticipating and fulfilling their needs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As students and members of ULM’s faculty and/or staff, we believe that applying these principles is necessary for achieving our vision.

• COMMITMENT:
  We commit to the success of our university and our students.

• ACCOUNTABILITY:
  We acknowledge and assume responsibility for our actions, decisions, and results.

• INNOVATION:
  We develop and implement creative ideas and solutions.

• EFFICIENCY:
  We pledge responsible stewardship of available resources.

• COLLABORATION:
  We seek partnerships that benefit our university.

• ACHIEVEMENT:
  We get positive results.
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS
2014-2015

• ULM was named as a Tier I regional university in the South by *U.S. News and World Reports*.

• BusinessInsider.com named ULM as Louisiana’s most underrated university.

• TheBestSchools.org rated ULM as the top online school in Louisiana.

• An hourly tuition rate for eULM students implemented during spring 2015 brought additional revenues into the operating budget.

• More than $10.3 million was donated to the ULM Foundation providing support for faculty and students and enabling requests for matching from the Board of Regents for one endowed chair, nine endowed professorships, and two first-generation scholarships.

• The $1-million Liew Family International Student Center opened in April 2015, providing a unique and comfortable facility for incoming international students to settle into life at ULM.
CHALLENGE
Decreased state funding, strong external control of tuition and fee rates, a lack of action to remedy inequitable funding policies, and concern about market sustainability combine to make the financial environment an impressive challenge for ULM’s future.

STRATEGY
1. Transform ULM to thrive in the inconsistent financial environment.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES, PROGRESS & STATUS

a) INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
Determine the optimal financial organizational structure for ULM and implement.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
The academic reorganization and administrative budget reductions were completed. These changes included a layoff plan which was approved and implemented, and cost savings realized will be evaluated annually.

b) FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM MIX
Develop and implement a Financial Sustainability Review process.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆
The Financial Sustainability Review Committee will begin analyzing data related to the financial viability of academic programs in fall 2015. A report of findings will be developed and distributed to the President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

c) INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND CONTROL FOR TUITION
Report on tuition rates throughout the region and on differential tuition rates.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆
An individual was assigned to collect data on tuition rates throughout the region. This information will be collected during fall 2015. Committee review of the data will begin in spring 2016.

d) NEW REVENUE STREAMS
Develop strategies to expand all revenue streams.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★☆
A new hourly tuition rate for online degree programs was implemented in spring 2015. The new rate generated additional revenues that were used to support the academic programs of the university. A revenue enhancement committee will begin meeting in fall 2015 to explore additional opportunities for growth.

e) ATHLETICS
Promote attendance and support of ULM athletic teams while maintaining a balanced budget.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★☆
External donations funded two projects that will help build the football program. Installation of a new field turf at Malone Stadium in summer 2014 provided a safer playing surface. Construction was begun on a new athletic field house which will help recruitment by providing modern facilities for coaches and players.

BILL GRAVES
Chief Business Officer
CHALLENGE
The need to maintain relevance to regional employers, the flat or slightly decreased trend in traditional student population, the new experiences and expectations of our students, and the increased presence of for-profit providers and larger, better-funded public institutions of higher education force ULM to operate in a dynamic and competitive environment.

STRATEGY
2. Position ULM to adapt to the rapidly-changing educational environment.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES, PROGRESS & STATUS

a) ACADEMIC PROGRAM PORTFOLIO
Implement an academic program review process.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
The review designed to improve academic programs began and will occur in a four-year cycle from now on. Two new programs—a Master of Public Administration and a Master of Science in Nursing—were approved for offering.

b) ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE
Design an infrastructure to support high-quality faculty.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
The reorganization of colleges, departments, and schools was completed and operations within that structure reached routine status. The ULM Foundation is increasing donations for endowed chairs and professorships to improve faculty infrastructure.

c) TARGETED STUDENT POPULATION
Implement a marketing and recruitment plan to approach and maintain program capacity levels.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
The Office of Public Information was reorganized and marketing efforts for the university consolidated into that office. Two staff members were hired to assist with marketing. The eULM marketing plan was revised and a new firm contracted to assist in those efforts.

d) PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES
Implement student-centered, hands-on and minds-on pedagogical strategies.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
Success was obtained from a pilot program that replaced developmental English and mathematics courses with supplemental courses taken concurrently with the first college-level course. College algebra was redesigned and success rates increased by 73% in two years.

LEGEND
☆☆☆ Not yet begun: will be addressed later in the plan’s period of operation
★★★ Some progress: has begun and initial advancement is being made
★★★★ Substantial progress: most actions are underway
★★★★★ Institutionalized: has been incorporated into regular university operations
CHALLENGE
In a buyer’s market, the quality of service experienced by customers influences their likelihood of return (loyalty). Higher education is definitely a buyer’s market these days, and, despite our resistance to that notion, students are our customers. Furthermore, the success of a university is increasingly being measured not by graduation rates or degrees produced but by employer satisfaction with alumni and by alumni achievement.

STRATEGY
3. Improve those critical elements leading to student success—from application through graduation and beyond.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES, PROGRESS & STATUS

a) STUDENT/ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES
Improve advising, enrollment management processes, and student advocacy.

PROGRESS TO DATE ⭐⭐⭐
The University Advising Committee began work on a holistic advising policy to be completed and implemented during 2015-2016. An action plan through fall 2015 included preparation for PREP advising, work on forms, and the web page. Enrollment Management expanded paperless workflow to Financial Aid and the Graduate School. An academic scholarship database was developed and used to streamline awarding and tracking.

b) CRITICAL SKILLS NEEDED BY STUDENTS
Identify skill sets for academic success and workforce success.

PROGRESS TO DATE ⭐⭐⭐
Two predictive models were developed: one models retention of FTFTF; the second models the effect of housing on student retention. A faculty and staff committee from the Student Success Center and Career Connections will begin identifying skill sets needed for academic and workforce success.

c) LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP
Improve university communication over the range from prospect to alumnus and improve alumni commitment to the university.

PROGRESS TO DATE ⭐⭐⭐
Software supporting consistent communication with alumni and donors was evaluated and updated. Staff were trained. Consultants evaluated the procedural infrastructure and made recommendations which were implemented. Individual areas reviewed their communications and made revisions. During 2015, the revamped Office of Public Information will begin a review of all communications to ensure a consistent message.

d) TECHNOLOGY
Implement best practices in IT, including sustainability as well as support to academic and student services.

PROGRESS TO DATE ⭐⭐⭐
Stability and continuity during natural disasters was improved by moving the campus administrative software, Banner, to the cloud. Further improvements will occur in 2015-2016 from email services moving to Office 365 in the cloud and the opening of a second internet pipe. Conversion to a Digital Library began. For 2105-2016, VOIP will replace our telephone infrastructure, a study of the replacement of desktops with terminals will be completed, and a plan for the cyclic replacement of critical IT infrastructure will be developed.
For years, ULM has operated as a hidden gem on the bayou. Its quality programs and dedication to student learning have produced alumni who have gained success at the state, national, and international levels—in the health and applied sciences, in business and industry, and in government and military service. It must now stand up and proclaim its successes, providing evidence of its achievements.

**STRATEGY**

4. Achieve recognition of our vision.

**LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES, PROGRESS & STATUS**

a) **DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT OF VISION**
Develop performance metrics for the terms best-performing, regional university and South.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
Progress toward achievement of our vision will become more quantifiable by spring 2016 because a committee has started to develop metrics that describe and measure ULM against identified regional universities as a “best performing regional university in the South.”

b) **OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE**
Improve and institutionalize continuous improvement cycles throughout the university.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
ULM’s continuous improvement cycle was improved with a more user-friendly and functional two-part self-study process for budget units and a new online assessment and evaluation system.

c) **COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING PLAN**
Develop a communication and marketing plan that will address both internal and external constituencies.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
The Office of Public Information was reorganized and is developing a new communication and marketing plan for the campus which will address social media, website and other marketing issues identified as critical to information dissemination. Two new staff members were hired to assist with plan development and execution.

d) **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT**
Implement an employee recognition program.

PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★
The Employee Recognition Committee was named in Fall 2014. An Employee Recognition Program began in Fall 2003.

**LEGEND**

- ★★★ Not yet begun: will be addressed later in the plan’s period of operation
- ★★★ Some progress: has begun and initial advancement is being made
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- ★★★★ Institutionalized: has been incorporated into regular university operations
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ULM is a member of the UL System; AA/EEO