

Introduction and Background

Every time you are tempted to react in the same old way, ask if you want to be a prisoner of the past or a pioneer of the future. – Deepak Chopra

Academic Affairs, in partnership with the other divisions, commits itself to the ULM Strategic Plan as the University continues to change lives for the betterment of the citizens of our region. The faculty, staff, and administrators will align divisional, collegiate, school, and program offerings, policies, and processes to fulfill ULM's mission and vision.

Several strategies and tactics from the ULM plan have been identified (presented in the wire frames) as falling either partially or totally within Academic Affairs. The following outline highlights those discoveries, the partnerships with other offices, as well as the steps Academic Affairs will take in fulfilling those obligations. The ULM plan has been cited for context.

In many instances, review committees will be commissioned in the fall 2022 semester to offer recommendations to Academic Affairs on current activities and innovations to enhance the division's ability to meet its responsibilities. To be clear, these review committees will not supplant standing university committees. They will offer recommendations for consideration. To help coordinate those efforts, the Academic Affairs Faculty Advisory Committee has been tasked with informing and guiding activities alongside the Council of Deans. The committee membership is; Dr. Deborah Craighead, Dr. James Boldin, Dr. Janelle McDaniel, Dr. Jessica Brady, Dr. Jose Cordova, Dr. Karen Briski, Dr. Mary Adams, Dr. McKay Bonner, and Dr. Patti Calk.

The work identified by committees' reviews will be vast, and some cannot be accomplished in one year. Part of the guidance offered by the two aforementioned groups will be to prioritize the work and establish reasonable completion dates. Along with the committee recommendations, academic and financial plans for all activities will be submitted, assessed, and used to determine feasibility of and progress toward the goals.

There will be a number of external and internal influences that Academic Affairs will address in the coming years. To that end, all planning and documentation needs to be flexible to adapt to new opportunities.

University Strategic Plan Connections

University Foundations: Resources

Essential Goal: Maximize Use of Financial, Physical, Technological, and Brand Resources to realize our mission of transformation and ensure the University's long-term sustainability.

Ensure all sources of financial resources are maximized and leveraged to achieve our mission of transformation.

Develop processes to commercialize services offered by faculty, staff, and students across campus. (with Business Affairs and OSPR)

Incentivize innovation among faculty and staff for the development of intellectual property. (with OSPR)

Enhance learning and campus community for our faculty, staff, and students by providing well-maintained, modern, and welcoming facilities.

Develop a plan for improvement of office, classroom, clinic, and lab spaces. (with Business Affairs)

Committee Topic: Research, Intellectual Property, and Indirect Costs: Review policies and procedures that will encourage and better leverage:

- a. Definition of research at ULM
- b. Impediments to research, both on and off campus
- c. Research marketability
- d. Opportunities for entrepreneurship through the University's intellectual products

Committee Topics: Facilities: Review current facilities and recommend opportunities to improve

- a. Classrooms
- b. Offices
- c. Support facilities
- d. ADA issues

Committee Topics: Academic Technology: Recommend new pathways for incorporation of current technology. Examples include:

- a. VR and AVR
- b. Multimodal classroom delivery
- c. Concierge-style applications for commutation and evaluations
- d. Course delivery methods
- e. Resources including electronic library resources and databases

Strategic Pillar 1: Student Success 1.1

Goal 1: Champion Student Success Through Innovative and Transformative Programs and Experiences

Initiative 1.1 Improve accessibility and affordability of college for students across the region

Increase opportunities for OER and AER textbooks (Open/Affordable Educational Resources) and/or new textbook program. (with Student Affairs)

Tactic: Dr. Will Rogers, Associate Professor of English, will continue to lead efforts on campus in conjunction with his appointed role with the University of Louisiana System. The target adoption rate is 75% of all courses that can use OER and AER resources. These efforts will need to be informed by activities and obligations of the Bookstore on campus. Completion deadline: August 2026.

Strategic Pillar 1: Student Success 1.2

Initiative 1.2 Recruit, admit, and enroll a diverse student body that is prepared for college study and representative of the racial/ethnic, gender, and social class of the region.

Assess current enrollment trends by program, level, and student demographics. (with Enrollment Management and Student Success)

Develop and execute a strategic enrollment management plan that supports an enrollment of 8,000 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students by 2026, exclusive of dual enrollment students. (with Enrollment Management and Student Success)

Develop and evaluate a strategic enrollment management plan for online programs and learners with specific enrollment targets and defined infrastructure support needs. (with Enrollment Management and Student Success)

Tactic: The Office of Assessment and Evaluation will lead in the development of a data dashboard that will provide real-time enrollment statuses by identified classifications. Trend analyses will be included where possible. Assessment and Evaluation will also lead in the production and dissemination of campus-wide enrollment reports so that the campus community is informed for progress toward established goals. Capacity studies for all ongoing programs will be completed and reviewed. Completion deadline: January 2023.

Tactic: Academic Affairs will co-lead production of enrollment management plans for undergraduate and graduate programs (both traditional and online) to address the cited targets. The plan as well as supporting assessment tools and progress reporting structures will be completed by January 2023.

Tactic: Establish an Office of Online Student Advocacy that can help with online student enrollment, retention, and planning. Completion deadline: January 2023.

Strategic Pillar 1: Student Success 1.3

Initiative 1.3 Increase retention of continuing students to support timely progression to graduation.

Develop and execute a comprehensive strategic retention plan to reach a 1st to 2nd year first-time, full-time student retention rate of 80%, a continuing student retention rate to 90% by fall 2026, and a 6-year graduation rate of 65% by 2031. (with Student Success)

Enhance student preparation, support, and advocacy for academic and non-academic needs by analyzing existing supports, structures, and initiatives to bolster their effectiveness and integration from first year to career. (with Student Affairs)

Create and use advisory boards for colleges or programs, where appropriate, to promote internships, support program development, or revise curricula to focus on current and emerging needs, opportunities, and challenges.

Analyze and integrate existing communication channels that are clear, efficient, and effective at reaching students and encouraging dialogue. (with Student Affairs and Student Success)

Advance and enhance academic advising through the University Advising Committee, while equipping and recognizing the advising process. (with Student Success)

Committee Topic: Student Recruitment and Retention

- a. Review current retention rates by individual programs
- b. Review current recruitment efforts by individual programs
- c. Analyze recruitment and retention of special groups
 - a. International

- b. Underrepresented minorities

Committee Topic: Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

- a. International faculty
- b. Diversity of faculty and staff
- c. Identifying strengths and weaknesses in overall recruitment and retention in the academic arenas

Committee Topic: Engagement

- a. Community Engagement
- b. Student Engagement
 - i. Mentoring
 - ii. Holistic education
 - iii. Active learning
 - iv. Experiential learning
 - v. Advising
 - vi. Office Hours
- c. Alumni Engagement

Committee Topic: Student cohort academic engagement

- a. Non-traditional
- b. Student/Athlete
- c. Transfer

Tactic: All programs will have active advisory committees established. Completion date: May 2024.

Committee Topic: Communications-Review and improve. Ensuring transparent, timely, and efficient communications

- a. Academic Affairs to campus and vice versa
- b. Deans Office to college and vice versa
- c. School Director to school and vice versa
- d. All entities to students

Strategic Pillar 1: Student Success 1.4

Initiative 1.4 Improve programs or initiatives to retain and graduate students from underserved and/or marginalized populations.

Develop academic support services designed to address the economic and social issues faced by students from underserved, marginalized populations. (with Student Affairs, DEI, and Student Success)

Examine curricula and develop process to increase diverse and inclusive content. (with DEI)

Increase the number of course offerings, in-services, seminars, and social activities to develop the knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of cultures represented at ULM and beyond. (with DEI)

Provide diversity, equity, and inclusion training and open conversations at professional development events such as University Week. (with DEI)

Committee Topic: Achievement Gaps

- a. Male vs female
- b. Underrepresented groups
- c. First Generation
- d. Graduate
- e. International

Committee Topic: General Education

- a. Review
- b. Introduction and reinforcement of ULS Graduate competencies in GE curriculum
- c. Map GE curriculum to aid programs in assessment and fulfillment ULS Graduate competencies

Tactic: Academic Affairs will collaborate with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to develop programming for domestic and international students. The new Faculty and Staff Center for Excellence will include planning and presentation of diversity and equity dialogue at the beginning of semesters and throughout the year. Completion date: May 2024.

Strategic Pillar 1: Student Success 1.5

Initiative 1.5 Provide academic and co-curricular services and programs to help students develop personally and professionally.

Provide experiences that help students discover and better understand career paths. (with Student Affairs)

Foster students' opportunities for emotional growth and support through discreet and peer-led platforms. (with Student Affairs)

Provide opportunities for students to gain leadership experience through organizations and professional workshops. (with Student Affairs)

Tactic: Develop a complete learning record that can be used to catalog progress toward the ULS graduate competencies and career readiness. Completion date: July 2024

Tactic: Investigate peer-led program initiatives such as Circle-In and the Mentor Collective to assist in achieving this goal. Completion date: March 2024.

Strategic Pillar 2: Faculty and Staff 2.1

Goal 2: Recruit, Develop, and Retain a diverse and qualified faculty and staff capable of achieving our mission of transformation.

Initiative 2.1 Improve recruitment of well-qualified, diverse candidates and improve long-term retention of faculty and staff.

Recruit new faculty and staff to fill open positions, with a focus on timely recruitment. (with Business Affairs)

Develop a strategic human resource plan for the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. (with Business Affairs and DEI)

Assess current faculty and staff workloads and develop a plan for equity and/or reduction of workloads, where needed. (with Business Affairs)

Committee Topic: Promotion and Tenure

- a. Currency of process
- b. Automation of process
- c. Alignment with the goals of the strategic plan
- d. Promotion hierarchy for instructors and incorporation of distinguished designations
- e. Rank beyond full professor
- f. Better recognition of Boyer Model in criteria

Committee Topic: Workload

- a. Office hours
- b. Getting credit for service and research
- c. Balancing credit hour production among faculty within the discipline
- d. Part-time and overload policies and pay rates
- e. More flexible work schedules

Committee Topic: Teaching and learning modalities

- a. Online
- b. Hybrid
- c. Multi-modal
- d. Active learning

Tactic: In conjunction with Human Resources, develop training modules for faculty search committees on best practices in how to advertise, evaluate, and interview in order to hire a more diverse and qualified faculty.

Strategic Pillar 2: Faculty and Staff 2.2

Initiative 2.2 Enhance faculty and staff well-being by investing in support services to improve effectiveness.

Create a Center that focuses on Teaching, Research, and Service Excellence to provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. (with Business Affairs)

Increase availability of training opportunities through investment in travel funds and external and internal professional development opportunities. (with Business Affairs)

Develop a University-wide plan incorporating flexible work methods and schedules (with Business Affairs)

Establish a faculty and staff club. (with the President and Business Affairs)

Committee Topic: Faculty Mentoring

- a. New faculty on-boarding
- b. Third year-review
- c. Inclusion in promotion
- d. The associate-to-full professor transition
- e. Assisting full professors
- f. Diminution of academic bullying
- g. Wellness (physical, emotional, and mental)
- h. Teaching innovation

Committee Topic: Climate and Culture

- a. Celebrating accomplishment
- b. Collegiality
- c. Innovation
- d. Faculty Senate role and function
- e. Work/Life balance
- f. Faculty Club
- g. Sensitivity to our community of learners
- h. Service mentality in university offices
- i. Workflow on Campus

Committee Topic: Academic Calendar

- a. Start and stop dates
- b. Length of term
- c. Number of terms
- d. Trimester possibilities
- e. Wintersession
- f. Summer
- g. University Days
- h. Holidays
- i. Class conflicts (e.g. number of Mondays in the fall and spring)

Committee Topic: Faculty and Staff Development Center

- a. Structure
- b. Services

Committee Topic: Faculty Awards

- a. Event
- b. Award process

Committee Topic: Commencement committee

- a. Order of ceremony
- b. Participation

c. Schedule

Strategic Pillar 3: Intellectual Activity 3.1

Goal 3: Maintain and support the level of intellectual activity necessary by our scholars to support innovation, preparation of students for successful careers and citizenship, and the creation and application of new knowledge.

Initiative 3.1 Continue to innovate, refine, and deliver strong academic programs for students' intellectual development.

Deliver academic programs that focus on improving students' critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, information/digital literacy, soft skills, and cultural competence abilities to prepare them for the contemporary workforce.

Continue to review each academic program every year to ensure relevancy, capacity, and appropriate support levels.

Strengthen and/or develop institutional policies and structures that support and enhance interdisciplinary academic innovation in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies. (with OSPR)

Promote and increase engaging pedagogies, technologies, and high-impact practices across the curriculum.

Evaluate and adjust the general education curriculum to foster greater support and innovation in degree programs and prepare students for post-graduate pathways.

Explore alternate course delivery methods to address the needs of a variety of student populations. (with DEI)

Committee Topic: Program Review

- a. Easier process
- b. More meaningful process
- c. Providing better data
- d. Implementation within the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils
- e. Completing the assessment loop

Committee Topic: Graduate School

- a. Graduate Council
- b. Graduate Faculty Status
- c. Peer Accountability
- d. Curriculum review
- e. Program review
- f. Graduate Student engagement

Committee Topic: Honors Program

- a. Structure
- b. Admissions

- c. Alignment with strategic plan

Committee Topic: Undergraduate curricula

- a. Processes and structure
- b. Graduate intersections
- c. Experiential Learning
- d. Service Learning
- e. Complete Learning Record

Strategic Pillar 3: Intellectual Activity 3.2

Initiative 3.2 Create and maintain a sufficient research infrastructure that supports the research and creative scholarly works of faculty, staff, and students.

Adequately staff and support the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. (with Business Affairs and OSPR)

Develop on-campus funding sources for grant matching funds. (with OSPR and Advancement)

Evaluate existing indirect cost policies to ensure supportive and fair distribution (with Business Affairs and OSPR)

Evaluate the current workload policy to ensure appropriate and equitable release time is provided for research and creative work efforts. (with Business Affairs)

Expand the current student research program, Emerging Scholars, to all student levels

Evaluate and update research resources (library, laboratories, and electronic resources).

Create mechanisms to encourage interdisciplinary research that will help strengthen brand of ULM.

Tactic: Along with committee work listed in previous initiatives that will address many of these items, the new Faculty and Staff Center for Excellence will host information sharing sessions regarding faculty research with the intention of expanding internal knowledge of ongoing campus research and cultivating interdisciplinary efforts. Completion Date: January 2023.

Tactic: The Library staff will conduct a thorough strategic plan that will outline how the ULM Library will align its efforts in promoting the University's new direction.

Strategic Pillar 4: Intellectual Activity 4.1

Goal 4: Expand community partnerships that improve the quality of life in our region, and expand economic opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Initiative 4.1 Maintain and expand mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships that maximize our impact.

Work closely with school systems in northeast Louisiana with an emphasis on dual enrollment offerings. (with Enrollment Management and Community Relations)

Maximize opportunities to offer and host visual and performing arts events for the community. (with Enrollment Management and Community Relations)

Maximize impact of university engagement with community through social services provided by programs and students (e.g., internships, student teaching, clinical rotations). (with Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and Community Relations)

Tactic: Dual Enrollment at ULM will be examined and new college-level policies implemented to meet the needs of the University and surrounding community. Completion Date: January 2023.

Tactic: VAPA will complete a thorough strategic plan that will include collaborations with area high schools, KEDM, and local municipalities. Completion Date: January 2023.

Tactic: All programs will have experiential learning opportunities that can include opportunities for community service and community-oriented activities. Completion Date: June 2023.

Strategic Pillar 4: Intellectual Activity 4.2

Initiative 4.2 Provide services essential to the region related to health care, business development, and education.

Design community service initiatives that are coordinated across campus and inclusive of northeast Louisiana. (with Enrollment Management and Community Relations and DEI)

Strengthen and develop additional public health services with an emphasis on serving rural areas in northeast Louisiana. (with Enrollment Management and Community Relations)

Explore new partnerships with business and industry to bolster local economy and create employment and internship opportunities for students. (with Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and Community Relations)

Expand continuing education, learning, and training opportunities throughout our region. (with Enrollment Management and Community Relations)

Expand and improve services provided by University research centers, labs, and clinics to address critical community needs. (with OSPR)

Tactic: Pursue a health and wellness community clinic space that can serve to support disaster evacuation efforts. Completion Date: Undetermined.

Tactic: Reimagine Continuing Education as a new outreach effort to better generate CEU's for the community. Completion Date: June 2023.

Tactic: Continue pursuit of the BRIN project toward implementation. Completion Date: Undetermined.

Tactic: Explore and implement relevant academic areas that have regional impact in, e.g., maritime sciences, disaster preparedness and recovery, drone (aerial and underwater), and earth systems, etc.

Tactic: Establish other services, e.g. pharmacy, drone, etc., that can serve the community and an alternative revenue source for the university. Completion Date: Undetermined.

Other Supportive Work

Other committees will be charged with reviewing the following topics to more fully support the plan. These committees will help provide foundational work on which Academic Affairs can build a sustainable environment based on reliable academic and financial data. The organization of Academic Affairs will need to be scrutinized to determine what structure best supports the strategic plan.

- A. Data Governance
- B. Academic Structure
 - a. Organizational chart
 - b. Responsibilities
 - c. Process and Policy Analyses
- C. Academic Budget Model
 - a. Revenue sharing
 - b. Incentive planning
 - c. Summer School
 - d. Business plans for all programs

Academic Affairs will establish a website for publication of all strategic planning materials, proposal submission, and to encourage dialogue. The Provost's Office will work with the Strategic Planning Taskforce and the Dean's Council to identify committees and committee assignments for highlighted initiatives. All colleges, schools, and programs will begin or continue working on strategic plans in their respective areas in support of the ULM Strategic Plan.