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## AmeriCorps

EARLIER THIS YEAR, President Barack Obama signed legislation that will triple the size of the AmeriCorps national

service program over the next eight years.

A former community organizer, he used the occasion to ask Americans to volunteer. "All that's required on your part is a willingness to make a difference," he said.

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette needed no encouragement.

It has the only campus-based AmeriCorps program in Louisiana and a solid history of service learning.

UL Lafayette's AmeriCorps began in 1995 at the urging of Dr. Joseph Savoie, then UL Lafayette's vice president for University Advancement. AmeriCorps' goal, he told *La Louisiane* a year

later, is to enhance the learning culture at the university so students gain "a sensitivity for their responsibility for service to their community."

Fourteen years after AmeriCorps was established on campus, Savoie is president of the university and over 400 AmeriCorps



DOUG DUGAS

From left, Paige Broussard, Christian Fontenot, Katie Fasnacht and Allison Leger.

students have spent more than 250,000 hours making a difference. They have tutored at-risk children in housing projects. Helped Habitat for Humanity build houses for low-income families. Engaged elementary school students in visual and language arts activities through the Writing in the Galleries program at University Art Museum. The list goes on.

There are monetary rewards. AmeriCorps members who complete the program earn education awards of \$1,250 to \$2,362; some also receive a small monthly living allowance or work-study payment.

But Dr. David Yarbrough, UL Lafayette's dean of Community Service, points out that an education award doesn't even pay for a semester's tuition.

AmeriCorps members choose between two levels of commitment in a service year: 450 hours or 900 hours. That works out to about 10 hours per week and 20 hours per week, respectively.

Why have so many students volunteered to devote so much of their time to AmeriCorps?

"They're a good group of students. They epitomize being engaged at an age and a responsibility that's beyond most college students," Yarbrough replied.

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## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Every dollar of state funding invested in UL Lafayette generates an \$8.62 return.

# 5

## To Protect and Serve

MORE THAN 3,000 LAW ENFORCEMENT professionals have graduated from the Acadiana Law Enforcement Training Academy on UL Lafayette's campus and become certified police officers.

About 85 percent of them have worked in Acadiana during their careers, estimates Keith Kellar, ALETA's training coordinator.



Latest grads: ALETA's 129th class graduated in March 2009.

The university was a founding partner when the academy was created 32 years ago. Today, it provides facilities for the academy, while the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office supplies its staff.

The academy offers tracks for law enforcement officers and corrections officers. Although it primarily serves eight Acadiana parishes, other agencies rely on ALETA. The state Attorney General's Office sends its investigators to the academy, for example. And, the Louisiana Department of Public Safety uses ALETA's curriculum as a model for training crash investigators.

Lafayette Parish Sheriff Mike Neustrom was a professor of criminal justice at UL Lafayette and director of ALETA from 1977 until his election as sheriff in 2000. He served as director of University Police from 1970 to 1974.

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## Treasure Trove

THE LOUISIANA FOLKLORE Digital Archive houses the collections of the Center for Louisiana Studies, including the archives of Cajun and Creole Folklore.

The archives hold priceless recordings of music, stories and conversation. Modern-day musicians pluck history from the files; researchers can eavesdrop on local culture in Edith Garland Dupré



TRAVIS GAUTHIER



Library, where four listening carrels are equipped with computers and headphones.

The musical mélange also has a presence on MySpace, where worldwide users can sample recordings.

Material from the archives is featured in the Louisiana Folk Masters series, which has produced two music CDs.