

Double Duty

Newest vice president will apply problem-solving skills in research, graduate studies

Dr. Duane Blumberg's 31-year career at UL Lafayette hasn't been limited to academics. • In 1973, for example, he served as interim director of athletics after the university was severely penalized by the NCAA for basketball recruiting violations. He worked behind the scenes, paving the way for Dr. Ray P. Authement, who was acting university president at the time, to propose a rebuilding program to the NCAA. • In the 1990s, Blumberg became a player in economic development efforts, serving on the boards of directors of two key organizations, the Lafayette Economic Development Authority and the Enterprise Center of Louisiana.

Those were extracurricular activities for the mathematician, who has served as dean of the College of Sciences for the past seven years.

Blumberg's wide-ranging administrative experience will serve him well in his new role as the university's vice president for Research and Graduate Studies.

"It's really about problem solving and trying to generate ideas to help the university continue to move forward," he said in a recent interview.

Authement, who became UL Lafayette's president in 1974, noted that "the university, in particular the College of Sciences, has developed and continued to grow under Dr. Blumberg's leadership."

Blumberg replaces Dr. Steve Landry, who became UL Lafayette's vice president for Academic Affairs last year. The duties of the vice

president for Research have been expanded to include supervision of the Graduate School. (See related story, page 3)



Dr. Duane Blumberg

His broad goals, so far, are to:

- support faculty, staff and departmental efforts to increase opportunities and external funding for research;
- help UL Lafayette take better advantage of technology internally;
- assist with expansion of University Research Park;
- encourage more collaboration with other universities, government agencies and private industry; and
- strengthen the graduate programs and boost the number of graduate students.

Blumberg will continue to pursue creation of "a chimpanzee observatory, a natural center for behavioral research," at UL Lafayette's New Iberia Research Center, one of the largest non-human primate research facilities in the world. The combination of respected researchers, such as Dr. Danny Povinelli, an associate professor of cognitive science, and facilities such as the NIRC, make UL Lafayette a prime location for a chimpanzee observatory, he noted.

The new vice president will also concentrate on retaining key research faculty. He predicts a nationwide shortage of computer science scholars, for instance. Fewer people are seeking doctorates in that field and many who have Ph.D.s in computer science are being wooed from universities by private industry.

Blumberg holds a bachelor of science degree in mathematics from USL, (now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) and a master's and doctorate in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin (Madison). He was an assistant professor of mathematics at the University of Texas before returning to teach at USL. ■

Merger is part of a plan to strengthen Graduate School

Combining the Graduate School and the Office of Research reflects UL Lafayette's intention to strengthen graduate studies, says the university's newest vice president.

"The idea is that graduate education is really very distinct from undergraduate work. Graduate programs are the place where students are brought into scholarly and research programs with their faculty members, mentors, and supervisors. It makes sense to bring these two areas together," said Dr. Duane Blumberg, who was recently named vice president for Research and Graduate Studies. (See related story, page 2.)

A member of the graduate faculty will be appointed as director of the Graduate School to work with Blumberg and the Graduate Council on the continued development of the university's programs.

This administrative structure exists at other universities, Blumberg said, citing the University of Wisconsin and the University of Southern Mississippi as examples.

Blumberg wants to increase support for UL Lafayette's graduate studies, especially its doctoral programs, and to boost Graduate School enrollment.

Graduate School offices will soon be moved from the second floor of Martin Hall to larger quarters on the third floor, adjacent to the Research Office.

UL Lafayette's Research Office and Graduate School have a lot in common, according to Blumberg.

"In the Research Office, it's our job to see that grants and contracts are administered according to the rules and regulations of agencies that grant them. And, the Graduate School has to administer the rules and regulations

that the graduate faculty have set up for the university," he said.

"A key aspect of both offices is helping the faculty, students and staff accomplish what they need to do. I want to ensure that we always remember that we're service offices and we need to see how we can help."

UL Lafayette offers eight doctoral programs—applied language and speech screening, biology, cognitive science, computer engineering, computer science, English, Francophone studies and mathematics—and 22 master's programs.

"We have some remarkable scholars and the opportunities for graduate students are really special," Blumberg said. "The close working relationships I see between our research faculty members and their graduate students is really something we can be proud of."

Telescope May Solve Mystery

NASA'S LAUNCH of an infrared telescope next year might help determine whether two UL Lafayette scientists' theory about a 10th planet is brilliant or bunk.

In the October issue of *Discover*, writer Kathy A. Svitil cites the work of John Murray, a planetary scientist in England who hopes to find a planet much larger than Jupiter by comparing photos of the sky taken by a high power telescope.

UL Lafayette physics professor John Matese, the late Patrick Whitman (also a UL Lafayette physics professor), and UL Lafayette astrophysicist Daniel Whitmire used data to infer the existence of a new solar companion. Matese believes the key to detecting such a huge heavenly body is the object's thermal energy.

"NASA's Space Infrared Telescope Facility, scheduled for launch next July, could settle the issue of Planet X for good," Svitil wrote. ■



"Lafayette's Best Kept Secret"

1801 W. Pinhook Rd.
Lafayette, La.

(337) 233-7147

USA/Canada

(800) 826-8386



Our full-service hotel features 295 newly renovated, deluxe over-sized rooms with refrigerators and coffee-makers, as well as:

- Remote TV and Alarm Clock
- Iron & Ironing Board
- Swimming Pool & Hot Tub
- Business Center
- Exercise Room
- Meeting and Banquet Services
- Close to attractions, restaurants & shopping

Enjoy casual dining in our Bayou Bistro and nightly entertainment at Scandal's Lounge

Tourism Think Tank

UL Lafayette shares its research to help Louisiana attract more guests

UL Lafayette's new Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism will be needed more than ever to help Louisiana entice travel-wary visitors. • The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon and a rural area of Pennsylvania near the nation's capital,

literally grounded domestic air traffic. All non-military planes were ordered to land immediately after the strikes. Airliners were soon ready to fly again, but travelers weren't. • The massive,

violent assault came at a time when Louisiana was celebrating the most successful year for tourism in its history, according to Lt. Gov. Kathleen Blanco, who leads the state's Office of Tourism.

About 24 million domestic and international travelers visited the Bayou State in 2000. That was a 12 percent increase over the previous year. Nationwide, the number of tourists rose only 1 percent, Blanco reported in August.

Visitors to Louisiana spent about \$8.7 million while taking in the sights. Almost every parish benefited: tourist spending was up in 58 of the state's 64 parishes, compared to 1999.

"More and more communities are getting aggressively involved in promoting themselves, and it pays off," Blanco said.

UL Lafayette's Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism was established to assist cultural and environmental tourism efforts across Louisiana. It brings together research associates from five of the university's nine academic colleges

who utilize and interpret cultural and environmental resources. Housed in Edith Garland Dupré Library, it opened in January.

related businesses and programs capitalize on Louisiana's appeal. The sessions drew standing-room-only crowds.

"Louisiana's rural regions and small towns are fortunately blessed with a wealth of cultural and environmental tourism resources," said Carl Brasseaux, a UL Lafayette history professor who is also the Center's director. "Yet many communities have not found the means of tapping into the popularity of the state's unique cuisine, music and environment, and as a result, they have not shared in the remarkable development of the Pelican State's tourism industry over the past decade."

A key purpose of the conference was to show how to "establish and promote cultural programs without destroying the existing grassroots institutions that constitute the foundation of the state's thriving cultural tourism industry," he added.

Brasseaux noted that UL Lafayette has played a central role in shaping Louisiana's Acadian identity through the efforts of its faculty and students and through its promotion of the unique resources of Acadiana.

The Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism created a website that contains an index to numerous online Louisiana cultural and environmental tourism resources, as well as parish sketches with links to area attractions. The site also features short essays on Cajun

music, zydeco and many other cultural topics. The web address is www.louisiana.edu/ccet ■



The new center hosted a conference on Sept. 8—three days before the terrorist ambush—to help tourism-