



I'm still a little giddy over the amount of national media attention UL Lafayette has received over the past few months.

The university has been featured by CNN, CBS, *National Geographic*, ESPN and *USA Today*, for example. Right when we were sending the magazine to press, we learned that The Discovery Channel will be on campus later this spring to document the work of a UL Lafayette biology professor.

I want to make it clear from the start that I don't believe coverage by national media is more important than coverage by area broadcast and print media. And, I believe the Acadiana media does a super job, for the most part, of covering the university. *The Advertiser*, Lafayette's daily newspaper, has a reporter whose regular beat is UL Lafayette, for instance.

But the value of national publicity can't be overestimated.

It all boils down to name recognition.

Companies like Nike and Chrysler spend oodles of money on advertising and promotions because they want consumers to remember their names and have a favorable impression of their products or services.

Name recognition is important to universities, too.

Consider research funding, for example. In theory, a grant application should be judged on its own merit. But, the truth is, people award funding and, like everyone else, they're influenced by what they see on television or read about in newspapers and magazines.

Of course, an agency won't fund a project just because it recognizes the name of the school where research would be conducted. But it's often to a researcher's advantage to be associated with a university that has received favorable nationwide publicity.

Student recruitment is another area in which name recognition can make a difference. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette benefits when top students across the country see its name among the 357 universities that *The Princeton Review* says are the best in the nation. For an outstanding student to want to attend a particular university, he or she has to know about it first. It's as simple as that.

Inside this issue of *La Louisiane*, you'll find some examples of the outstanding programs and people at UL Lafayette that have caught the eye of national media. We hope you enjoy it.

– Kathleen Thames