

Academic Safety Net

More first-time freshmen will receive guidance from university mentors

A TRIAL PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES faculty and staff mentors to some first-time UL Lafayette freshmen will be expanded for the Fall 2007 semester.

It was created last fall to give academic support to 100 students who did not meet guaranteed admission criteria. Those students were allowed to enroll

after receiving permission from a university committee that reviewed their applications for admission by exception. (There are a variety of circumstances that make an applicant eligible to appeal, such as graduating with a high school equivalency diploma or from a non-accredited high school.)

Success of the mentoring program is measured by grade point averages, number of course credits earned and percentage of students who returned for the Spring 2007 semester.

Grade point averages of the 100 students with mentors were almost as high as the GPAs of students who met the university's regular admissions requirements.

According to UL Lafayette's Registrar's Office, the average GPA of students in the mentoring program was 2.48 after the fall semester. Students admitted by regular admissions posted an average GPA of 2.52.

The average GPA of students who did not meet admissions requirements – and did not participate in the mentoring program – was 2.05.



Willie Ricks Jr., left, was paired with UL Lafayette Dean of Students Edward Pratt. They try to meet once a week to share a pizza and talk about Rick's progress and options.



Dr. Nancy Ortego, left, an instructor in the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions, volunteered to serve as a mentor for first-time freshman Keydra Thomas. The College of Nursing has a separate, ongoing mentoring program that provides guidance and support to students seeking nursing degrees.

Mentored students, on average, earned 12 hours of credit, while students meeting admissions requirements averaged 13 hours. Students who did not meet admissions requirements, and did not participate in the mentoring program, acquired an average of 10 hours of credit.

"These numbers show that the mentoring program is having an impact on these students," said Jennifer Hightower, executive director of UL Lafayette's Office for Campus Diversity. She is administrator

of the program, which evolved from one sponsored by the university's Black Faculty and Staff Caucus.

Dr. Steve Landry, UL Lafayette's vice president for Academic Affairs, said 92 percent of the first-time freshmen who had mentors returned for the Spring 2007 semester. "Our hope is to build on the program's success and expand it by increasing the numbers of participating faculty and staff," he said.

Dean of Students Edward Pratt was a mentor to Willie Ricks Jr. of Houma, La.

"The program allows for students to have an immediate attachment to the university, as well as a person who cares about their success. They have direct access to information, someone to bounce ideas off of, someone to clarify things that may be confusing for a first-time freshman," Pratt said.

Ricks and Pratt have some common interests, such as football. Both played the game in high school; Pratt went on to play for USL, now known as UL Lafayette.

Ricks said his mentor has provided valuable information about UL Lafayette, as well as extracurricular activities and student groups, such as its Pre-Professional

Society. As a result, Ricks recently decided to major in biology and is considering the possibility of applying for medical school in the future.

The pair meets every Tuesday, over a pizza, to discuss Ricks' progress. Now a second-semester freshman, he is taking courses which, upon successful completion, will produce a total of 16 academic credit hours. A 12-hour course load is the minimum required for classification as a full-time student, while 18 hours is considered to be a taxing course load.

Pratt said he is convinced that Ricks wants to succeed. "He does not want to let himself down, nor does he want to let his parents down; I think I add to that list."

The dean of students is optimistic about Rick's academic performance this spring. "He is determined, motivated and confident and he will do well."

Ricks said he wants to set a good example for his 15-year-old brother. "Everything I do, he does. So if I stay away from drugs, stay off the streets and finish college, that will be what he wants to do. I am in college for him," he said.

Dr. Stephen Knouse is head of the Department of Management in the B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration. In addition to serving as chair on the college's diversity committee, he has worked on diversity issues as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense.

"A lot of times, people think of diversity simply in terms of race and ethnicity. But diversity can mean other things, too," Knouse said.

Like UL Lafayette's dean of students, Knouse has something in common with the first student he is mentoring in the trial program, Caleb Kestner. Knouse served in the U.S. Air Force. Kestner is a 22-year-old U.S. Marine veteran.

"In fact, Caleb's very first question was, 'How do I get in touch with the Veterans Administration to get my GI Bill money?' I was able to help him with that. I've had experience



Dr. Stephen Knouse, left, and his mentee, Caleb Kestner, are both military veterans. Knouse served in the U.S. Air Force; Kestner is a former U.S. Marine.

with the VA," Knouse said.

Kestner earned a 4.0 GPA for his first semester as a university student.

"Being in the military, I think he has much more self-discipline than a typical 17- or 18-year-old just coming out of high school would," Knouse said.

The mentoring program was structured to dovetail with the students' freshman orientation class. So, there were recommended times during the semester for mentors to meet with their charges.

"But Caleb took it upon himself to check in with me every couple of weeks. He'd tell me what grade he got on a test," Knouse said. The mentoring program was valuable because it gave Kestner access to a specific person on campus who was particularly interested in his student experience, he added.

Knouse has volunteered to serve as a mentor in Fall 2007 for another first-time freshman admitted by committee. He said he would especially like to help out another student who is a fellow military veteran.

"Ideally, I think we should be doing this with all of our students, but with an enrollment of over 16,000, we simply don't have enough faculty and staff to go around." ■



Jennifer Hightower, left, executive director of UL Lafayette's Office for Campus Diversity, is administrator of the trial mentoring program. During the Fall 2006 semester, she served as a mentor for Noelle Ventroy, right.

Look Online For Campus Maps

HAVE YOU EVER WISHED you had a map of UL Lafayette handy?

Now, detailed maps of the main campus and of University Common, which encompasses Ragin' Cajun athletic facilities and University Research Park, are as close as your computer screen. They were produced this spring by UL Lafayette's Office of Public Relations and News Services.

The colorful diagrams are posted online in a format that enables them to be downloaded and printed.

Copies will be distributed during freshman orientation. A limited number of them will also be available at the Information Center in front of Martin Hall, the university's main administrative building, at 104 University Circle.



louisiana.edu/AboutUs/CampusMap.pdf

In addition to showing the locations of buildings, the 15-inch by 19-inch maps:

- suggest "must see" campus features, such as Cypress Lake and the Walk of Honor;

- provide general information about UL Lafayette; and

- contain phone numbers for key departments and services, such as University Police and Dupré Library.

Public parking areas and oaks planted more than 100 years ago by the university's first president, Dr. Edwin Stephens, are also indicated.

The maps originated as illustrations, produced by Anne Darrah of Darrah Design + Marketing, for the Spring 2006 issue of *La Louisiane*, the university's magazine. They illustrated an article about UL Lafayette's progress since its 100th anniversary in 2000.

The illustrations were then refined and developed as maps with the assistance of Megan Barra of Megan Barra Graphic Design.

NOW SHOWING ON YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has released a new DVD.

Now showing on the Internet: "It's All About You," an eight-minute video starring Zac Stelly, a junior majoring in kinesiology who has performed in theatrical plays on campus.

"It's often said that the university is a vital component of Acadiana. If you've ever wondered why, this is something you should watch," said Julie Simon-Dronet, director of UL Lafayette's Office of Public Relations and News Services. "It's All About You" is a fast-paced look at programs and projects from the perspective of people who benefit from them."

The video was first shown at an "Eggs and Issues" session of the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce in September. A panel of faculty members and administrators was on hand to talk about various aspects of the university and field questions from an audience of about 300 people.

"It's All About You" is a production of UL Lafayette's Office of Public Relations and News Services and Holbrook Multi Media Inc. of Lafayette.

Rated: G

louisiana.edu/video/PRNS



Graduate School Got Start 50 Years Ago

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

A total of 11,010 master's degrees and 701 doctorates have been granted by the university over the past five decades.

Graduate courses were offered at Southwestern Louisiana Institute (now UL Lafayette) for the first time in fall 1957. The first master's degrees were conferred on five students in 1958.

In 1971, Dr. John C. Peck earned the first Ph.D. awarded by the university. Now professor emeritus in the Computer Science Department at Clemson University, he was the keynote speaker at UL Lafayette's Fall 2006 commencement in December.

At press time, Dr. Cindy Courville, the first U.S. ambassador to the African Union, was scheduled to give

the keynote address at the Graduate School's Spring 2007 commencement. She is based at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Courville holds

bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from UL Lafayette and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Denver.

UL Lafayette offers Ph.D. programs in applied language and speech sciences, biology, cognitive science, computer engineering, computer science,

English, Francophone studies and mathematics. It offers a joint program with Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, La., for a doctor of education degree in educational leadership. It also has 29 master's degree programs and one post-master's certificate program.

<http://gradschool.louisiana.edu>



STUDENTS' WORK AT KRVS EARNS ACCLAIM

"LOUISIANA FOCUS," a series produced by UL Lafayette communication students, earned KRVS the "Best College Radio Station" honor from the Southeast Journalism Conference this spring.

It was the third consecutive year that the National Public Radio affiliate on UL Lafayette's campus has earned that title.

KRVS also won first place in the "Radio Newscast" category of Society for Professional Journalist Region 12 competition for "Louisiana Focus." Eight UL Lafayette students received SJC awards; four students collected SPJ Region 12 awards.

KRVS is broadcast on 88.7 FM. Its studio is in Burke-Hawthorne Hall.

"Our mantra, really, all along has

been to do all things local. We're about public service. We're about promoting the local culture and the musicians and the artists in the area. We're an extension of the university, so our effort is not only to inform and entertain, but also to promote the University of Louisiana at Lafayette," said Dave Spizale, KRVS general manager.

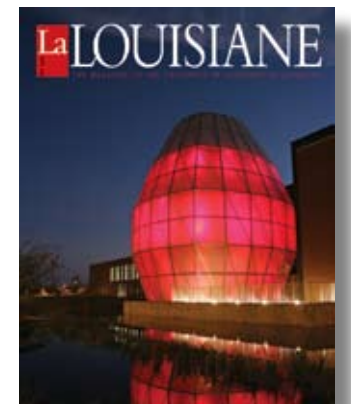
The station's reach extends far beyond campus and Lafayette.

"Our signal is broadcast at 100,000 watts and our coverage area goes from Baton Rouge over to the Texas border, north to Alexandria and then way out into the Gulf of Mexico. So, we have about 650,000 Louisiana residents than can benefit from listening to KRVS," Spizale said.

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For more information, contact Kathleen Thames at (337) 482-6397.



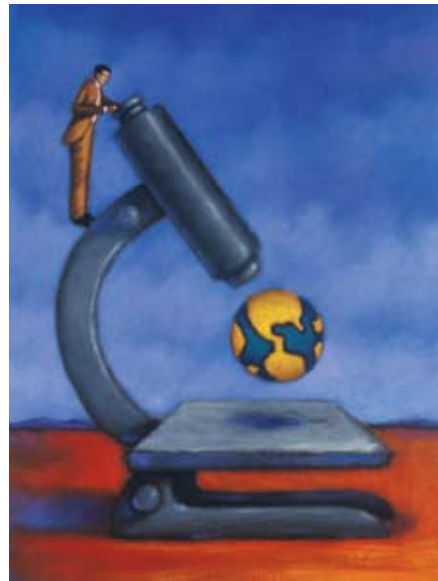
Political Science Majors Can Obtain A World View

STUDENTS SEEKING A DEGREE in political science can obtain a new concentration in international relations.

The option went into effect in Fall 2006.

A degree concentration is a variation of an existing degree program. UL Lafayette offers a bachelor's degree in political science or a political science/pre-law degree.

Political science is traditionally the study of governments and the political behavior of citizens and officials. But Dr. Bryan-Paul Frost, the James A. and Kaye L. Crocker Endowed Professor of Political Science at UL Lafayette, said it also covers "interactions of groups like al-Qaida, which are not political units, strictly



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speaking. . . If someone is interested in the effects of global terrorism, for example, this is clearly the field to go into."

Students seeking the new concentration will take courses that have international or intercultural dimensions.

"They are required to take more modern language courses than other political science majors. They are required to take world geography instead of United States geography. They take world history, rather than American history, and world literature rather than American literature," Frost said.

<http://pols.louisiana.edu>

AUTHEMENT, FRANCIS LAUDED AS LONGEST-SERVING PRESIDENTS



Dr. Ray Authement

UL Lafayette President Dr. Ray Authement was honored by higher education peers in March, along with Dr. Norman Francis, president of Xavier University in New Orleans.

Authement is the longest-serving public university president in the country, with more than 32 years of service. Francis is the longest-serving private university president; he's been Xavier's president for 39 years.

They were recognized during the 69th annual Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities held at Houmas House plantation in Darrow, La.

"Dr. Authement is one of the most respected education leaders in the country," said Dr. Sally Clausen, president of the University of Louisiana System. "Colleagues turn to him for advice on academic issues, fund raising, economic development, money management and politics. We observe how students, faculty and staff respect him, yet affectionately, call him 'Doc' as though he were a doctor of everything. Mastering all he has undertaken, Dr. Authement has set the standard for quality, scholarship and courage of conviction."

Authement was named president of the university in 1974, after serving a year as its acting president. Under his guidance, the university has become a major economic force in Acadiana, while earning a national reputation in the fields of computer science, nursing, environmental and biological research, and Francophone studies.

He is responsible for the development of University Research Park, which houses numerous national research centers and a hotel. During his administration, UL Lafayette became a selective admission institution and the first Doctoral II university in Louisiana.

He was a major force in successful efforts to change the name of the university from the University of Southwestern Louisiana to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Since Authement became the university's fifth president, Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns have competed in NCAA Division 1, the highest level of collegiate athletic competition. The football team is a member of NCAA Division 1-A.

In the past decade, a building boom produced the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum, Moody Hall, a new computer science building and Legacy Park student apartments. Edith Garland Dupré library was expanded and totally renovated. And, a 400-plus parking garage is under construction near Angelle Hall.

The university's gifted assets have surpassed \$100 million under Authement's direction. UL Lafayette has 18 endowed chairs, each valued at \$1 million. It has more than 140 endowed professorships, valued at \$100,000 each, through the Board of Regents matching program and 29 endowed professorships funded through private sources.

BANNERS FEATURE UL LAFAYETTE MARKS



TRANS GAUTHIER

ABOUT 200 NEW BANNERS bearing UL Lafayette and Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns® logos are displayed on utility poles along major municipal thoroughfares.

"The street banners are a very visible reminder of the university's presence and influence in Lafayette and Acadiana," said Julie Simon-Dronet, director of the university's Office of Public Rela-

tions and News Services.

They dot high-traffic routes such as Johnston Street; Louisiana Avenue, near its intersection with Interstate 10; Ambassador Caffery Parkway; and University Avenue. Half the banners feature the school's logo, while the other half bear the athletics mark.

There are plans to explore the possibility of expanding the street banners program into area towns.

A partnership formed by the Lafayette Utilities System and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Student Government Association, Union Program Council, and Office of Public Relations and News Services resulted in acquisition and installation of the signs.

"UL Lafayette's logo, which features a fleur-de-lis, expresses pride in its French Louisiana heritage," said Simon-Dronet.

The fleur-de-lis was an element of the school's first crest, which was adopted in 1926. It was incorporated into the university's official logo in the mid-1990s. And, in 1998, it became the centerpiece for a bold, consistent look for Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns®.

The university first installed street banners in 1999 in conjunction with its 100th birthday celebration.

New Scholarship Targets Freshmen

FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN who need financial assistance will have an additional resource, beginning this fall.

That's when the University of Louisiana at Lafayette will begin offering its Educate Louisiana need-based scholarship. It provides \$3,000 per academic year to students who meet certain guidelines.

"We have invested our own money in this venture," said UL Lafayette President Dr. Ray Authement. "We are attempting to identify students who meet our admissions requirements but need this scholarship to be able to pursue higher education at this university."

At press time, UL Lafayette officials were fine-tuning criteria that a student must meet to be eligible to receive an Educate Louisiana scholarship.

According to preliminary guidelines, which are subject to change, a

first-time freshman must be a Louisiana resident, eligible for a PELL grant, ineligible to receive TOPS and have an income equal to, or less than, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

A qualified student may receive the assistance for a maximum of four years, for a total of \$12,000. The Educate Louisiana scholarship will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

"We're hoping that the Louisiana Legislature will fund efforts by the state Board of Regents to create even more resources to support programs such as Educate Louisiana," Authement said.

For more information, please contact the Office of Enrollment Services at (337) 482-6467.

www.admissions.louisiana.edu/basics

Center Makes More Room For Students



Workers are busy converting the fourth floor of the Conference Center on Rex Street into student housing.

That space had been occupied by the Center for Advanced Computer Studies and the Computer Science Department. They moved into the Advanced Computer Technology and Research Hall when it opened in January.

"That gives us about 160 additional beds, which we desperately need on campus," said Bill Crist, director of UL Lafayette's Physical Plant. The additional student quarters may be available for the start of the Fall 2007 semester.

University officials have been grappling with a shortage of on-campus housing. The second and third floors of the Conference Center are already student residences.

Crist said students consider the Conference Center to be a desirable place to live. He cited its location, which is near Dupré Library and Griffin Hall, and its spacious rooms.

"Also, each room has a shared bath with only one other room," he said.

The university also plans to expand Legacy Park.

"We think we're going to be able to add about another 160 beds at Legacy Park and that will probably pretty much max out that site," Crist said.

Empty buildings behind Legacy Park, once used for family housing, will be torn down to make room for the new units.

www.housing.louisiana.edu