

# New Direction

'Creative, innovative things happen when you cross boundaries'

**T**HE DEAN OF THE B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration is exploring ways to partner with other colleges on campus and to strengthen three specialized business programs.

Dr. Joby John began his post on July 1, 2007. He replaced Dr. Lewis Gale, who left the university in 2004.

Before he was hired by UL Lafayette, John served for eight years as a full professor and chair of the Department of Marketing at Bentley College near Boston, one of the largest private business schools in the United States.

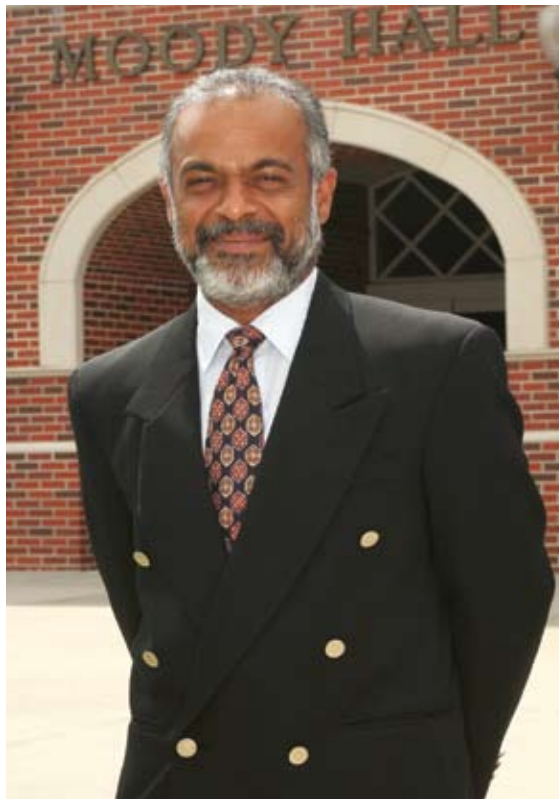
In a recent interview, John said the B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration has "solid programs. We have a cadre of excellent teachers in every department."

UL Lafayette has six traditional business programs: accounting, management information systems, economics, finance, management and marketing. Because the college's core offerings are so strong, he can concentrate on developing interdisciplinary programs.

"The interesting things in academe are really happening at the cusp or boundaries of disciplines. It's not within disciplines. The creative, innovative things happen when you cross boundaries.

"Industry is clamoring for that. It's saying, 'We don't want a cookie-cutter person to do cookie-cutter things that we've always done. We're not going to compete that way. We want to progress and progress comes from being creative and innovative.'"

UL Lafayette has three programs



Dr. Joby John

rarely found at the roughly 2,000 business schools in the United States: insurance and risk management, hospitality management, and professional land and resource management.

John estimates that about 25 American business schools have insurance and risk management programs; about 10 have hospitality management programs. Only four business schools in North America have professional land and resource management programs.

UL Lafayette's specialized programs were created to meet particular needs in Louisiana, John said. So, he wants to be able to provide more graduates in those fields and to capitalize on what other colleges can contribute. "There are ways

in which other departments could support any one of these three."

John noted that the College of Business Administration has paid more attention to international business in the past couple of years. An international business concentration was added, for example. And, it now offers minors in French or Hispanic language and culture.

John has been getting to know key business and community leaders in Acadiana, in part, by serving on boards or committees for organizations such as Rotary, Le Centre International and Lafayette General Medical Center.

Through those contacts, he has learned there is a need among small businesses in Acadiana for professional development. "So, we want to find a way to deliver professional development workshops for small businesses, either through UL Lafayette's Small Business Development Center or through the B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration," he said.

BLAINE FAULK

John has also created the Acadiana Chief Financial Officers' Roundtable with 35 participants from the largest companies in Acadiana. It convened for the first time in March; it will meet quarterly.

"Its purpose is to exchange ideas. We benefit by being able to hear what their needs are. As CFOs, they see the entire business picture for their companies.

"It turns out that their major problem right now is labor. They're not able to hire the people they need. We're in the business of providing an educated work force. I'm hoping this forum can help us keep our curriculum relevant in the region," he said. ■

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