August 1, 2014

One year ago, the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) began a five-year strategic plan to guide the efforts of its students, faculty, staff, and administrators. By 2018, ULM seeks to be recognized among the best-performing regional universities in the South. This document summarizes the status of our first year’s work, in keeping with my commitment to transparency and accountability.

As a reminder to everyone, we have repeated our mission, vision, core values, and guiding principles so that these foundational elements remain fresh in everyone’s memory.

The report’s next section highlights some of the year’s significant accomplishments. Stabilizing ULM’s financial situation emerged from the strategic planning process as our greatest need, and the internal reorganization and administrative reductions made during the past year helped us do that. It freed up over $1 million, some of which relieved spending from restricted funds. The other dollars were invested in the initiatives identified later in this document under our strategies. With increasing revenues through the use of a new model for online degree programs and more successful fundraising, our financial stability will allow us to continue building.

Increased innovation and collaboration have also been sought as a means to distinguish ULM and to better meet quickly-changing workforce demands. The reorganization within Academic Affairs streamlines its administrative structure, reducing bureaucracy and providing more opportunities for collaboration across disciplines. Consequently, we expect to see greater academic innovation and shorter times for enacting change.

This report’s last section summarizes the progress made to date in achieving our four strategies’ long-term objectives, and I am pleased that we are on-track with the plan’s timeline.

After completing the first year of our strategic plan, we are making progress toward a vision where we are recognized as a top-performing regional university. Our 2014 freshman class looks to be the best academically-prepared in the university’s history. For the second year, we expect to see more enrolled students from outside our traditional service area than from inside it. Clearly, the message about ULM’s quality academic programs, our welcoming faculty and staff, our beautiful campus, and our exciting student life is reaching and registering with more students and their parents. If you have contributed to this past year’s effort, thank you. If you haven’t, I ask you to get involved this year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nick J. Bruno
President
MISSION
The University of Louisiana at Monroe seeks students who find value in our programs and prepares them to compete, succeed, and contribute in an ever-changing global society through a transformative education.

VISION
The University of Louisiana at Monroe will be recognized among the best-performing regional universities in the South.

CORE VALUES
As students and members of ULM’s faculty and staff, we desire these values at all times.
- ACADEMIC FREEDOM:
  We believe that freedom in teaching and research is critical to ULM’s mission.
- DIVERSITY:
  We value and respect differences because we are enriched by a broad range of ideas and perspectives.
- EXCELLENCE:
  We uphold high standards.
- INTEGRITY:
  We commit to honesty, truthfulness, and rightness of action.
- SCHOLARSHIP:
  We pursue the expansion of knowledge through teaching, research, and creative works.
- SERVICE:
  We pledge to be courteous, respectful, and positive in our interactions with others, anticipating and fulfilling their needs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
As students and members of ULM’s faculty and staff, we believe that applying the following principles is necessary for achieving our vision.
- COMMITMENT:
  We commit to the success of our university and our students.
- ACCOUNTABILITY:
  We acknowledge and assume responsibility for our actions, decisions, and results.
- INNOVATION:
  We develop and implement creative ideas and solutions.
- EFFICIENCY:
  We pledge responsible stewardship of available resources.
- COLLABORATION:
  We seek partnerships that benefit our university.
- ACHIEVEMENT:
  We get positive results.
• An academic reorganization increased collaborations and innovation across disciplines. It and other administrative budget reductions will yield significant cost savings over several years and will allow resources to be shifted based on strategic priorities.

• Distance-learning initiatives were concentrated into the eULM office. A proven model for online degree programs and a per-hour tuition and fee structure will grow online enrollment and increase self-generated revenue.

• A new Athletic Director was hired, and a strategic plan for Athletics was developed. External support for athletics increased drastically during the past year, improving football facilities.

• Expansion of our Wi-Fi infrastructure and implementation of a social media plan enhanced communication and connectivity. The decision to use “cloud” services for Banner will develop greater resilience to natural disasters.

• A revised online assessment and evaluation system increased the friendliness and functionality of continuous improvement cycles across campus.
Decreased state funding, strong external control of tuition and fee rates, a lack of action to remedy inequitable funding policies, and concern about market sustainability combine to make the financial environment an impressive challenge for ULM’s future.

### STRATEGY

#### 1. Transform ULM to thrive in the inconsistent financial environment. (Graves)

#### a) INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Determine the optimal financial organizational structure for ULM and implement.

**PROGRESS TO DATE ★★★**

The academic reorganization and administrative budget reductions have been completed. These changes included a layoff plan which was approved and implemented, and cost savings realized will be evaluated annually.

#### b) FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM MIX

Develop and implement a Financial Sustainability Review process.

**PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆**

Members of a Financial Sustainability Review Committee have been identified. Meetings should start in Fall 2014 to begin review of financial viability of academic programs.

#### c) INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND CONTROL FOR TUITION

Report on tuition rates throughout the region and on differential tuition rates.

**PROGRESS TO DATE ☆☆☆**

An individual has not been assigned to perform this review yet. The review should begin in Fall 2014.

#### d) NEW REVENUE STREAMS

Develop strategies to expand all revenue streams.

**PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆**

A new hourly tuition rate for online degree programs has been developed. This new rate will increase revenues and allow for greater flexibility in budgeting. A committee will be established to discuss additional opportunities. The committee will include the new Executive Director (Foundation) and new Manager (Grants and Contracts). The committee will meet when these positions are both filled.

#### e) ATHLETICS

Promote attendance and support of ULM athletic teams while maintaining a balanced budget.

**PROGRESS TO DATE ★★☆**

A new Athletic Director has been hired. A strategic plan for the athletic program has been developed. A significant increase in external support has been realized. Facility enhancements have already occurred, and new facilities are in the planning stages.

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**LEGEND**

- ★★★ Not yet begun: will be addressed later in the plan’s period of operation
- ★☆☆ Some progress: has begun and initial advancement is being made
- ★★☆ Substantial progress: most actions are underway
- ★★★ Institutionalized: has been incorporated into regular university operations
### CHALLENGE

The need to maintain relevance to regional employers, the flat or slightly decreased trend in traditional student population, the new experiences and expectations of our students, and the increased presence of for-profit providers and larger, better-funded public institutions of higher education force ULM to operate in a dynamic and competitive environment.

### STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Position ULM to adapt to the rapidly-changing educational environment. (Pani)</th>
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#### a) ACADEMIC PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

- Implement an academic program review process.

  **PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆**

  An ad hoc committee of faculty and administrators recommended a program review process. A standing committee of faculty and administrators to conduct the reviews was named. Reviews will begin in Fall 2014. Three new programs were approved for offering and two others are under consideration.

#### b) ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Design an infrastructure to support high-quality faculty.

  **PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆**

  The colleges and schools within Academic Affairs were reorganized to improve collaboration and innovation.

#### c) TARGETED STUDENT POPULATION

- Implement a marketing and recruitment plan to approach and maintain program capacity levels.

  **PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆**

  eULM was formed to grow online enrollment. A marketing and recruitment plan for it was developed and implemented.

#### d) PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

- Implement student-centered, hands-on and minds-on pedagogical strategies.

  **PROGRESS TO DATE ★☆☆**

  Faculty, staff, and administrators participated in a webinar on flipped classrooms. Two faculty were supported with summer pay to restructure one course each, teach the course during AY 2014-2015, and report on their process and results during a University Week presentation in Spring 2015.

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In a buyer’s market, the quality of service experienced by customers influences their likelihood of return (loyalty). Higher education is definitely a buyer’s market these days, and, despite our resistance to that notion, students are our customers. Furthermore, the success of a university is increasingly being measured not by graduation rates or degrees produced but by employer satisfaction with alumni and by alumni achievement.

### Challenge

#### 3. Improve those critical elements leading to student success — from application through graduation and beyond. (Richters)

### Strategy

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<tr>
<th>A) Student/Academic Support Services</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Improve advising, enrollment management processes, and student advocacy.</td>
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<td><strong>Progress to date</strong> ★☆☆</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Advising Committee has been reconstituted and will begin meeting in August. The Ad Hoc Retention Committee has: 1) developed specific charge for the Advising Committee; 2) implemented several new retention initiatives for Fall 2014.</td>
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<th>B) Critical Skills Needed by Students</th>
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<td>Identify skill sets for academic success and workforce success.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Progress to date</strong> ☆☆☆</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predictive models are being developed to identify critical characteristics for student success.</td>
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<th>C) Long-Term Relationship</th>
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<td>Improve university communication over the range from prospect to alumnus and improve alumni commitment to the university.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Progress to date</strong> ★☆☆</td>
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<tr>
<td>The technical and procedural infrastructure used to support consistent communication with alumni is being evaluated and brought up to date. Review of specific communications and the communication flow will begin in Fall 2014.</td>
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<th>D) Technology</th>
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<td>Implement best practices in IT, including sustainability as well as support to academic and student services.</td>
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<td><strong>Progress to date</strong> ★☆☆</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ad Hoc IT Committee has been named and has been meeting. It has completed a preliminary cataloging and review of University IT infrastructure and resources. IT improvements include: residential student Wi-Fi services were significantly upgraded; campus administrative software is being outsourced to the “cloud” providing stability and ensuring continuity during natural disasters.</td>
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### Legend

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For years, ULM has operated as a hidden gem on the bayou. Its quality programs and dedication to student learning have produced alumni who have gained success at the state, national, and international levels — in the health and applied sciences, in business and industry, in education and the arts and in government and military service. It must now stand up and proclaim its successes, providing evidence of its achievements.

**Challenges**

4. **Achieve recognition of our vision.** (Brumfield)

**Long-term Objectives, Progress & Status**

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**a) Definition and Measurement of Vision**
Develop performance metrics for the terms best-performing, regional university, and South.

**Progress to Date ★☆☆**
A committee has been formed to develop metrics to describe and measure ULM against identified regional universities as “best performing regional university in the South.”

**b) Operational Performance and Continuous Improvement Cycle**
Improve and institutionalize continuous improvement cycles throughout the university.

**Progress to Date ★☆☆**
A committee has been working on improving reporting cycles by developing a two-part self-study process for budget units, and a new online assessment and evaluation system has been implemented to improve user friendliness and functionality.

**c) Communication and Marketing Plan**
Develop a communication and marketing plan that will address both internal and external constituencies.

**Progress to Date ★☆☆**
The Office of Public Information is in the process of developing a new communication and marketing plan for the campus which will address social media, website and other marketing issues identified as critical to information dissemination.

**d) Acknowledgement of Achievement**
Implement an employee recognition program.

**Progress to Date ★☆☆**
The Employee Recognition Committee has been identified. However, no further actions have taken place. An Employee Recognition Program will take place in Fall 2014.