



**The University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

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*T*radition

**T**ransition

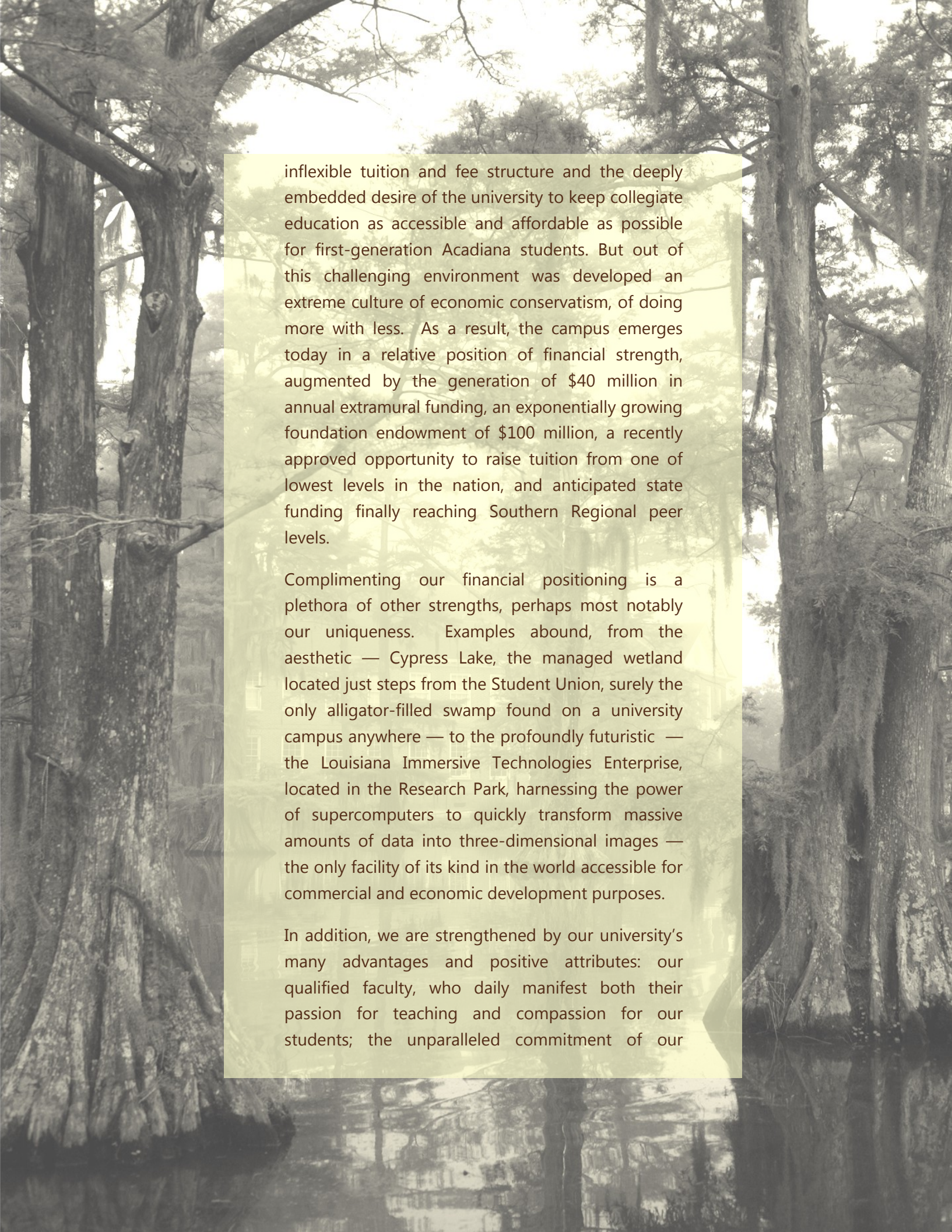
*T*ransformation

The 2009-2014 Strategic Plan

### Our Strategic Planning Environment

In June 2008, after 34 years in the presidency, Dr. Ray Authement retired as the longest standing chief executive officer of a four-year public institution of higher learning in the United States. During his tenure, he orchestrated the evolution of the University from one with a regional name and influence to one with internationally-acknowledged signature degree programs enrolling over 16,000 baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral students. In this new millennium, UL Lafayette has indeed emerged as a global newsmaker. Team CajunBot developed an autonomous land vehicle that has participated in three exclusive races sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense. The Beausoleil Team was one of 20 chosen worldwide to compete in the U.S. Department of Energy's 2009 Solar Decathlon in which universities design and build an experimental house powered entirely by the sun. The Mini-Baja team recently placed fourth in an international contest sponsored by the Society of Automotive Engineers. And, the CAPE 1 team constructed and launched a picosatellite now orbiting the earth. But we, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, have not always been here at the cusp of distinction.


President Authement led the University of Louisiana at Lafayette through an era characterized by an unpredictable and undiversified regional economy and, consequently, during a period of widely fluctuating and inadequate state funding. Exacerbating these fiscal challenges were both an



inflexible tuition and fee structure and the deeply embedded desire of the university to keep collegiate education as accessible and affordable as possible for first-generation Acadiana students. But out of this challenging environment was developed an extreme culture of economic conservatism, of doing more with less. As a result, the campus emerges today in a relative position of financial strength, augmented by the generation of \$40 million in annual extramural funding, an exponentially growing foundation endowment of \$100 million, a recently approved opportunity to raise tuition from one of lowest levels in the nation, and anticipated state funding finally reaching Southern Regional peer levels.

Complimenting our financial positioning is a plethora of other strengths, perhaps most notably our uniqueness. Examples abound, from the aesthetic — Cypress Lake, the managed wetland located just steps from the Student Union, surely the only alligator-filled swamp found on a university campus anywhere — to the profoundly futuristic — the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise, located in the Research Park, harnessing the power of supercomputers to quickly transform massive amounts of data into three-dimensional images — the only facility of its kind in the world accessible for commercial and economic development purposes.


In addition, we are strengthened by our university's many advantages and positive attributes: our qualified faculty, who daily manifest both their passion for teaching and compassion for our students; the unparalleled commitment of our



service and support staff, whom students explicitly recognize as being critical to their success; our increasingly prepared and achievement-oriented student body; our strong liberal arts emphasis, structured to create holistically knowledgeable and ethical life-long learners; the proud and supportive locals who, without overt invitation, regularly wear red on Fridays in a spirited act of solidarity; the encompassing sense of community and cohesion manifested by our diverse campus family; our generous donors and benefactors who gift to and entrust us with significant endowments; our broad-based dedication to community outreach; and our advanced technological positioning and infrastructure, visibly evident across campus from our numerous student-funded SMART classrooms to our supercomputer, Zeke, situated to capitalize on the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) and the National LambdaRail.

Even so, we understand our enthusiasm ought be tempered by a realism regarding related challenges and limitations that mitigate our strengths and often lead to the genesis of intolerable paradoxes. To illustrate, during the past five years, over \$150 million of campus construction has yielded numerous new and renovated academic and student support facilities. Yet we now find that our campus of over 200 structures is landlocked, with many buildings suffering the effects of years of deferred maintenance.

Other dichotomies abound. For example, the university's administration team is motivated and poised to lead our institution beyond our extant prominence, yet crippled by the inability to exploit



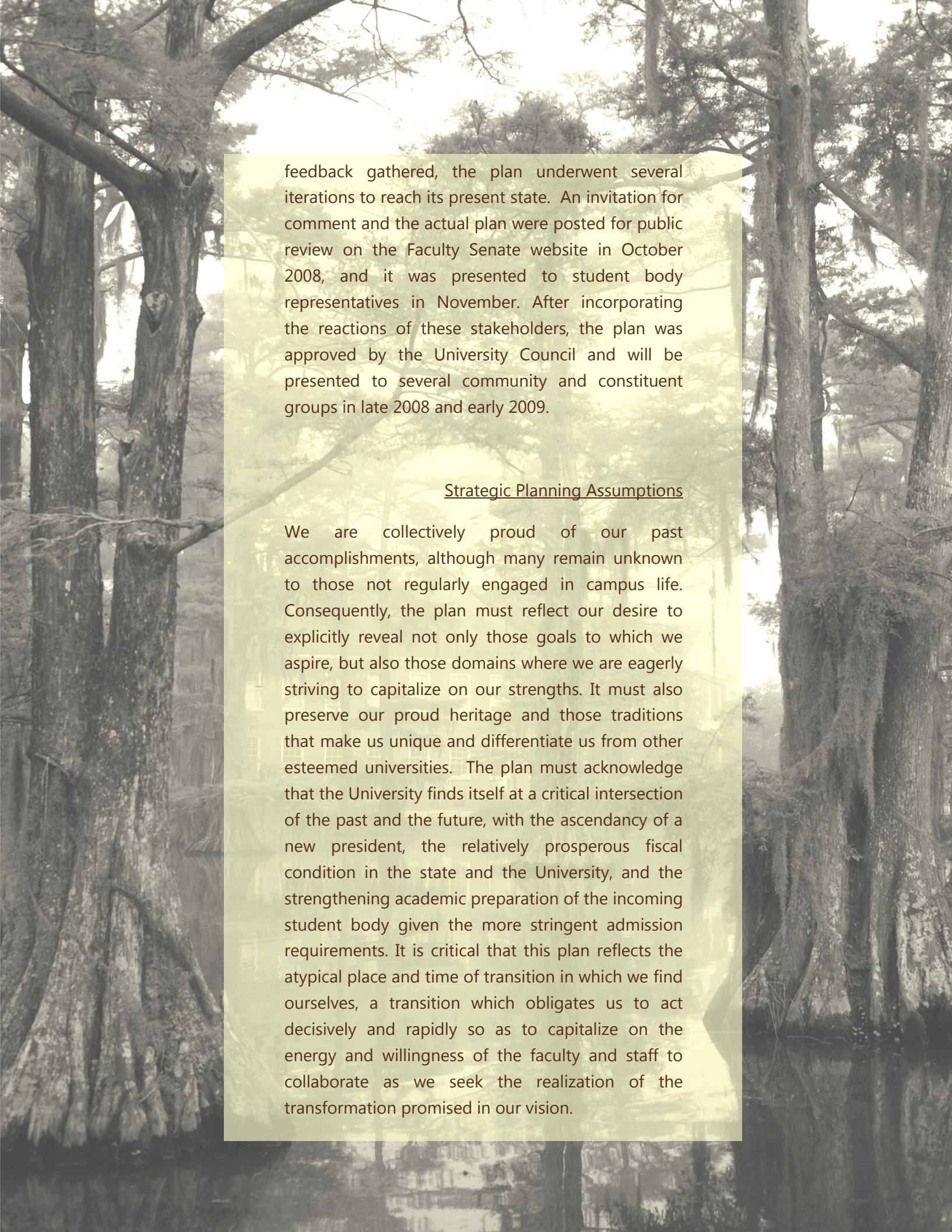
evident strategic opportunities because of its structural leanness. We are nationally lauded for having the country's most distinctive moniker in the Ragin' Cajuns, yet we fail to recruit and retain coaching and athletic department staff needed for our namesake to become associated with a winning tradition. Our alumni are anecdotally proud of their association with the university, but are very inactive in contributing to annual funds or in participating in other forms of giving back. Our students are fiercely loyal and possess a robust sense of family values, but their insular attachments too often serve to dissuade them from travelling or studying abroad. Selective admissions standards, fully implemented in 2005, have elevated the academic credentials of our student body to levels exceeding the national average, yet attrition in the honors program remains inexplicably high. We recently celebrated the acquisition of the millionth volume to be housed in our library, yet we increasingly serve a population demographically, technologically, and socially oriented to consider the library a virtual destination rather than a physical place.

In all these realms, we concede the opportunity to do better. Hence, this strategic plan. It is a plan borne out of the recognition that this is the time – a time of transition and of opportunity – in which we are ideally suited to celebrate our traditions and strengths, acknowledge our challenges, and intentionally pursue the transformation to distinction of which we are imminently capable.

### The Strategic Planning Process

In July of 2007, the James L. Fisher, Ltd. educational consultancy firm was retained to conduct an institutional effectiveness audit in anticipation of the search for and subsequent inauguration of a new president. Dr. Fisher and his team carried out a thorough document review and interpersonally met with over 250 UL Lafayette constituents in preparing the environmental scan. His final report on the state of the University issued in October 2007 yielded numerous suggestions. These suggestions became the framework upon which incoming President E. Joseph Savoie formulated, in April 2008, six thematic advisory teams collectively comprised of over 75 internal and external stakeholders. In July 2008, the advisory teams presented their much-heralded recommendations to the campus and the community. The CEO of Noel-Levitz higher education consultancy visited in September 2008, and after meeting with 74 representatives from all areas of campus, offered insight into enhancing our enrollment process with particular emphasis on student recruiting and retention. In October 2008, these reports were integrated with existing planning and governance documents to form the corpus of this strategic plan.

During that same month, several forums were conducted and moderated by both internal and external facilitators to discuss and modify the proposed plan. In attendance at these sessions were faculty members, department heads, research center directors, deans, vice presidents, and service/support directors and coordinators. As a result of



feedback gathered, the plan underwent several iterations to reach its present state. An invitation for comment and the actual plan were posted for public review on the Faculty Senate website in October 2008, and it was presented to student body representatives in November. After incorporating the reactions of these stakeholders, the plan was approved by the University Council and will be presented to several community and constituent groups in late 2008 and early 2009.

#### Strategic Planning Assumptions

We are collectively proud of our past accomplishments, although many remain unknown to those not regularly engaged in campus life. Consequently, the plan must reflect our desire to explicitly reveal not only those goals to which we aspire, but also those domains where we are eagerly striving to capitalize on our strengths. It must also preserve our proud heritage and those traditions that make us unique and differentiate us from other esteemed universities. The plan must acknowledge that the University finds itself at a critical intersection of the past and the future, with the ascendancy of a new president, the relatively prosperous fiscal condition in the state and the University, and the strengthening academic preparation of the incoming student body given the more stringent admission requirements. It is critical that this plan reflects the atypical place and time of transition in which we find ourselves, a transition which obligates us to act decisively and rapidly so as to capitalize on the energy and willingness of the faculty and staff to collaborate as we seek the realization of the transformation promised in our vision.

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the largest member of the University of Louisiana System, is a public institution of higher education offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Within the Carnegie classification, UL Lafayette is designated as a Research University with high research activity. The University's academic programs are administered by the Colleges of the Arts, Education, Engineering, General Studies, Liberal Arts, Nursing & Allied Health Professions, B. I. Moody III College of Business Administration, Ray P. Authement College of the Sciences, and the Graduate School. The University is dedicated to achieving excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, in research, and in public service. For undergraduate education, this commitment implies a fundamental subscription to general education, rooted in the primacy of the traditional liberal arts and sciences as the core around which all curricula are developed. The graduate programs seek to develop scholars who will variously advance knowledge, cultivate aesthetic sensibility, and improve the material conditions of humankind. The University reaffirms its historic commitment to diversity and integration. Thus, through instruction, research, and service, the University promotes regional economic and cultural development, explores solutions to national and world issues, and advances its reputation among its peers.

## Vision

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To further the university's evolution as a distinctive institution recognized as a catalyst for transformation—of students, faculty, Acadiana, Louisiana, and the globe—through its engagement in research, scholarship, creativity, and the enhancement of our unique culture.

## Values

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UL Lafayette's core values reflect the principles in which we believe and to which we aspire as we collaborate and persist toward the fulfillment of our mission.

- 1| Access, opportunity and success for all students as we synergistically partner with them in their development as globally-responsible, productive citizens.
- 2| An informed appreciation for and desire to contribute to our culturally-rich and unique community, which simultaneously embodies a progressive spirit of creativity, a dedicated work ethic, a resilient value for family, and a robust joie de vivre.
- 3| The creation and dissemination of knowledge that elevates the stature of our community of scholars and contributes to the betterment of our world.
- 4| Civility and integrity in all of our interactions to promote a collegial, diverse and healthful learning environment.
- 5| Engagement of all our stakeholders in our pluralistic quest to fulfill our mission.
- 6| Stewardship which demonstrates an appreciation and respect for all the resources which we can impact and which have been entrusted to us.
- 7| Commitment to open communication and constructive dialogue to foster a shared understanding of our progress, challenges and accomplishments.

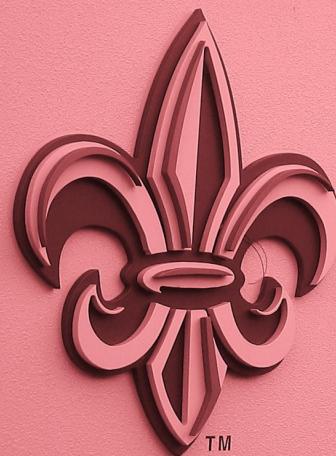




# *Our Eight Strategic Imperatives*

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- 1. Improving the student enrollment process*
- 2. Enhancing student engagement and success*
- 3. Facilitating quality teaching and learning*
- 4. Supporting the research portfolio of our community of scholars*
- 5. Preparing our students to thrive as global citizens*
- 6. Creating an institution our stakeholders will highly regard*
- 7. Optimizing administrative effectiveness and efficiency*
- 8. Fostering economic and community development*



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# Strategic Imperative 1 | Improving the student enrollment process

## 1A | To raise awareness and enhance the visibility of our institution

- create a unified and integrated website with appropriate interactivity, utility, comprehensiveness, aesthetics and communicative capacity
- showcase the University through the development of general and program-specific recruitment materials and advertisements
- promote our graduate programs more vigorously
- determine and attain the student population size that meets regional demands and maximizes efficient utilization of resources
- recruit students with increasingly stronger academic preparation, credentials and talents

## 1B | To advance our positioning as an institution of 'choice'

- review, streamline and improve the process of awarding scholarships
- invigorate the quality of the Honors Program
- improve cleanliness, general conditions and the physical attractiveness of the campus
- ensure campus accessibility for the disabled
- build new residential halls and restore existing dorm facilities
- modernize and restore historic facilities and renovate Martin Hall
- engage in academic facilities planning to ensure an appropriate learning environment

## 1C | To better manage our enrollment processes

- create a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan
- partner with secondary educational institutions
- develop improved electronic communications networks with students

- enhance the number and success of transfer students

- revamp and elevate the relevance of orientation for all students





## Strategic Imperative 2 | Enhancing student engagement and success



### 2A | To create a meaningful first-year experience

- develop a substantive and formative first-year seminar for incoming students
- foster a commitment to making a difference through service to the region
- bond students with others through learning communities
- create an understanding of the importance of mental and physical health on learning
- provide resources to assist students with choosing or affirming their choice of major

### 2B | To improve the campus climate for students

- construct a student union that will serve as the gateway to campus life
- enrich the vitality of campus life through extra- and co-curricular activities
- create synergies among and optimally integrate student support and service units
- improve service to internal and external constituents

### 2C | To increase the number of students graduating

- implement an online degree audit system
- increase the graduation rates of transfer, at-risk, non-traditional and underrepresented students through the nurturing of appropriate support services and programs
- grow selected undergraduate and graduate programs
- involve career services early in our student's academic progression
- increase the number of graduates in high-demand professions
- reduce the average time required for undergraduate students to matriculate





## Strategic Imperative 3 | Facilitating quality teaching and learning

### 3A | To recruit and hire the best faculty for student learning

- enhance commitment to faculty development
- reinforce quality teaching and student research
- promote faculty diversity
- engage adjunct faculty members in the life of the university
- motivate faculty to provide more course offerings in the summer
- create and fill all currently vacant endowed chairs with faculty of national prominence

### 3B | To enhance the classroom experience

- continue addressing IT infrastructure in the classroom
- create increased opportunities for active learning and community engagement
- raise the profile of graduate study and create the environment and funding structure for growth
- offer distance learning to select markets and assure high quality delivery
- increase student opportunities to customize a viable cross-disciplinary degree program
- grow and encourage internships and co-op experiences

### 3C | To improve learning through evidence-based assessment

- increase staffing in the office of institutional research
- proactively incorporate institutional research in the university planning processes
- implement an integrated enterprise management system
- continue a coordinated assessment of institutional and student learning outcomes

# Strategic Imperative 4 | Supporting the research portfolio of our community of scholars

4A | To plan strategically for enhanced research efforts and results

- develop an integrated, coherent approach to incentivizing, measuring and promoting research productivity at the individual, college and university levels
- clearly define and support the attainment of aggregate productivity targets in the basic, applied, pedagogical and funded domains of research

4B | To foster the creation of rigorous research and other eminent intellectual contributions

- explicitly incorporate quality as a performance dimension
- forge avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration on meaningful and influential research projects
- ensure access to and availability of the informational and physical resources necessary for the creation of high-impact research
- increase attainment of competitive federally– and industry-supported grants for funding research and graduate assistants

4C | To focus on signature initiatives supporting the future of our earth and society

- launch innovative and non-redundant signature initiatives to take advantage of our potential strengths and external opportunities for funding and support
- consider development efforts dedicated to funding viable programs of basic research

4D | To grow successful academic 'centers' and programs to enable greater levels of achievement

- encourage center staff members to engage in reciprocal interaction with academic departments
- ensure provision of a budget to cover essential center needs when warranted by a positive return on investment




## Strategic Imperative 5 | Preparing our students to thrive as global citizens

### 5A | To participate in international interdependencies

- centralize functions associated with international students and internationalization
- increase the number of international students and exchange faculty
- expand and invest in study abroad programs to maximize student opportunities for participation
- internationalize the curriculum in all colleges
- develop strategic partnerships with international universities
- sponsor intercultural events on campus

### 5B | To ensure our students succeed in the global environment

- reinforce the importance and acceptance of diversity
- **emphasize sustainability and actions for prudently handling environmental resources**
- enable students to evaluate rationally the causes of global problems
- socialize students to value and internalize the need to protect human rights



## Strategic Imperative 6 | Creating an institution our stakeholders will highly regard

### 6A | To make campus accomplishments more evident

- strategically improve marketing of current endeavors
- develop brand recognition of, preference for, and loyalty to the university
- publicize high-profile (signature) initiatives, research contributions and academic programs
- focus on enhancing and broadening our institutional reputation locally and distally

### 6B | To provide support for the athletic programs and the Ragin' Cajun Athletic Foundation

- strategically and systematically renovate athletic facilities through support of a capital campaign and other sources of nontraditional financing
- develop an academic center for the athletes to enable their educational success
- establish an endowment for athletics to increase competitiveness within the conference

### 6C | To increase voluntary contributions for educational purposes

- develop a master plan for donor relations, fund raising and stewardship
- determine the optimal relationship between the University and affiliated organizations
- elevate the role of colleges in fund raising initiatives
- improve alumni relations through the creation of contemporary engagement opportunities

### 6D | To plan for the growth needs of the University

- formalize a master plan for the use and future expansion of university properties and facilities
- develop property acquisition and disposal policies



## Strategic Imperative 7 | Optimizing administrative effectiveness and efficiency

### 7A | To focus on human resource management challenges

- change the evaluation of faculty performance and the awarding of merit pay to a system that simultaneously reflects budgetary constraints and motivational factors
- streamline and expedite the hiring procedures for faculty
- monitor and ensure faculty compensation at all ranks is competitive with appropriate benchmarks
- develop a comprehensive personnel system for the hiring and enlightened management of unclassified professional staff
- increase the number of administrative support staff
- determine and meet classified staff needs for evaluation, development and recognition

### 7B | To optimally structure the organization

- examine the formal and informal administrative organization and reporting structures to ensure the appropriate level of (de)centralization
- automate the purchasing process and post budgets online
- foster communication among internal stakeholders
- create a culture emphasizing the value of good service
- combine local, state and federal relations into a single government relations office
- strategically reengineer the centralized information technology unit





## Strategic Imperative 8 | Fostering economic and community development

8A | To support internal stakeholders working to generate a positive economic, scientific, cultural or social impact

- increase access to and awarding of external funds for research and other learning activities
- foster activities of internal stakeholders that have the potential for enterprising ventures
- incentivize the invention and commercialization of intellectual property
- encourage interdisciplinary initiatives that preserve our regional culture
- engage in outreach to enhance regional citizens' physical health and well-being



8B | To further develop the research park to enable both research generation and economic development

- develop a master plan for the park's future growth
- strategically cultivate tenants based on consideration of synergistic collaborations and economic sustainability
- carefully segment and locate prospective tenants in the each of the university's research intensive sites and locations

8C | To increase the interface between the community and university

- create a regional economic development council to leverage our intellectual assets and applied research for the betterment of the area
- continue and make known our emphasis on partnering with regional not-for-profit enterprises

8D | To enhance the vibrancy of the State of Louisiana

- collaborate with economic development entities to mitigate exporting of state educated college graduates

