



For Immediate Release: Jan. 24, 2008

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Over \$450,000 Awarded to Universities for Service-Learning Programs

Attention Media: this release contains university-specific and region-specific information to localize stories.

Universities

Grambling State University

Louisiana Tech University

McNeese State University

Nicholls State University

Northwestern State University

Southeastern Louisiana
University

University of Louisiana at
Lafayette

University of Louisiana at Monroe

Dr. Sally Clausen President

The UL System:

- Ranks among the 20 largest public systems in the U.S.
- Enrolls approx 80,000 students
- Employs over 8,000 faculty/staff
- Awards more than half of the public college degrees in Louisiana

BATON ROUGE – The University of Louisiana System awarded 22 grants today to advance student service-learning in the areas of hurricane recovery including training in disaster and emergency response, numerous building efforts including homes and the restoration of a historic African-American church, and assistance to the New Orleans Recovery School District.

“As Louisiana continues to recover from the devastating hurricanes of 2005, it is gratifying to know we have top faculty, staff and students at our universities who will be investing their time, resources, and brainpower to make a difference,” said UL System Board Chair Elsie Burkhalter, who lost her Slidell home during Katrina and is still in the process of rebuilding.

Today’s awards, totaling \$453,186, combined with a required one-to-one campus match, yield a total investment in service-learning of almost \$1 million. Below is a breakdown of awarded funds per campus:

- Grambling State University: \$45,000
- Louisiana Tech University: \$64,292
- McNeese State University: \$55,478
- Nicholls State University: \$14,784
- Northwestern State University: \$36,016
- Southeastern Louisiana University: \$43,925
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette: \$92,743
- University of Louisiana at Monroe: \$100,948

“Higher education today must not only provide students with a competitive academic experience, we also must ensure that students led by their own faculty will link classroom experiences with meaningful opportunities to serve. The result is an improved society and a better educated student,” said UL System President Sally Clausen. “We hope these combined experiences will prepare students to make a better living for themselves and a better life for others.”

Service-learning provides numerous benefits to the student. According to UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute, student participation in service has positive impacts on leadership ability, grades, retention, degree aspirations, critical thinking skills and commitment to helping others in difficulty.

Furthermore, research shows at least 50 percent of students who engage in service during college will continue volunteering after they graduate.

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“Service-learning is simply good teaching. The best faculty make clear the tie between education and citizenship and each of you are to be commended for that,” said UL System Associate Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs Brad O’Hara at Thursday’s ceremony.

The grants are made possible through a three-year, \$1.2 million grant to the UL System from the Learn and Serve America division of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Awards presented today are the second phase of the three-year grant program. Last year, the UL System awarded \$606,918 to 29 projects.

More than 3,000 students participated last spring in the start of the first round of programs. In one semester alone, they generated over 14,000 volunteer hours with 95 community partners in service-learning efforts.

The following are brief summaries of funded projects by campus:

GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY – 2 Projects: \$45,000

1. A Collaborative Commitment: Grambling State University, Southern University-Shreveport, and Habitat for Humanity Rebuilding Louisiana through Service-Learning

Partnering GSU and SU Shreveport students with Habitat for Humanity and the American Red Cross to build housing for victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and to receive disaster training.

2. Enhancing the Quality of Life for Senior Citizens in a Rural Community after the Trauma of Katrina/Rita

Partnering GSU Social Work students with the City of Grambling, and the AARP to provide continuing education and support seminars for senior citizens.

LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY – 3 Projects: \$64,292

1. Integrating Community Resources for Disaster Preparedness in Lincoln Parish

Partnering Louisiana Tech nursing faculty and students with the Ruston Fire Department, Ruston Police Department and the Lincoln Parish Incident Command to provide disaster preparation training for potential nurses and EMS personnel.

2. Mapping the Future Landscape for Two Southwestern Louisiana Parishes

Partnering Louisiana Tech and McNeese State University students with the cities of Vinton and Cameron to design landscapes with more open spaces that are adapted to weather natural disasters, especially hurricanes.

3. Utilizing Abandoned Homes to Assist Families Devastated by Disasters: A Unique Response and Recovery Model

Partnering Louisiana Tech architecture and interior design students with the Shreveport Bossier Community Renewal, the AIA of Shreveport and Monroe, Habitat for Humanity, and IDEC to design renovation plans of abandoned homes that could be used as temporary shelters for displaced families.

MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY – 3 Projects: \$55,478

1. Assessment of Rural Well Water Quality in Southwest Louisiana in the Post-Rita Era

Partnering McNeese students with the Calcasieu Parish Health Unit and the Lake Charles Division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to assess well water quality in Southwest Louisiana that may have become contaminated from the 2005 hurricanes.

2. Children in Balance Service-Learning Project

Partnering McNeese dietetic students with Fairview Elementary School to teach elementary students how to select healthy food and how to participate in fun physical activities.

3. Technology Training For Hurricane Preparedness

Partnering McNeese students with local public libraries and non-profit agencies to provide technology training to the public – specifically focused on how to search for and post information in the event of an evacuation.

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NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY – 2 Projects: \$14,784

1. Little Zion/St. Luke's Baptist Church Service Learning Project

Partnering Nicholls students with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Architectural Department and the Lafourche Heritage Society for the historical preservation and physical restoration of an abandoned African-American church that is part of a former plantation system in rural Chackbay.

2. Marine Debris Removal at Grand Isle State Park

Partnering Nicholls students with The Nature Conservancy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, AmeriCorps, Grand Isle State Park and the Grand Isle community to remove litter and marine debris along beach and dune areas and teach the ecological impacts of trash on Louisiana's barrier islands.

NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY – 2 Projects: \$36,016

1. Combating Truancy: A Prevention and Remediation Focus for the New Orleans Recovery School District

Partnering Northwestern counseling students with the New Orleans Recovery School District, the Seton Resource Center of New Orleans, and the Alexandria branch of the LSU Ag Center to provide school counselors in the New Orleans Recovery School District with the resources and materials to help parents and students understand the importance of school attendance.

2. Heritage Education Activity at Badin-Roque Historic Site

Partnering Northwestern Heritage Resources students with the Creole Heritage Center, St. Augustine Historical Society, the Society for Heritage Resources, and Natchitoches Parish elementary schools to design and implement multiple community-based heritage education activities for elementary school students.

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY – 2 Projects: \$43,925

1. Everybody's Child: Teacher Preparedness in Times of Crisis & Recovery

Partnering Southeastern education students with Hofstra University in New York, Livingston and St. Bernard Parish School Systems and Kate Middleton Elementary School in Jefferson Parish to train teachers to help students during catastrophic events.

2. "We Shall Overcome": Narrating the Challenges of the Early Civil Rights Movement in Southeastern Louisiana

Partnering Southeastern students with the Tangipahoa Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to capture oral histories of Civil Rights movement participants

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE – 4 Projects: \$92,743

1. After the storm: A Community Food System Assessment of Five South Central Louisiana Parishes

Partnering UL Lafayette students with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana to assess and provide recommendations to mitigate hunger with healthy and nutritious options for the needy.

2. Conducting Home Energy Conservation Audits in Hurricane Recovery Areas

Partnering UL Lafayette students with local middle and high school teachers, the Acadian Home builders Association, Doug Ashy Building materials Inc., and South Louisiana Energy Company to conduct testing and community education of home energy conservation and energy reduction for Louisiana home owners.

3. Families, Children and Community: Understanding and Replicating the Mahalia Jackson Center Early Childhood and Family Learning Center

Partnering UL Lafayette's Center for Child Development and the Applied Language and Speech Sciences Doctoral Program with the Orleans Parish School Board, the Recovery School District, the Louisiana Public Health Institute, the Agenda for Children, and Head Start to support existing efforts to establish an early childhood and family learning center at the Mahalia Jackson Center in New Orleans' Central City neighborhood.

4. X-treme Spring Break 2008: Students Rebuilding Louisiana

Partnering UL Lafayette students with students from the other seven University of Louisiana System institutions, Lafayette's Habitat for Humanity Chapter and The American Red Cross to trade their spring breaks to build homes and participate in workshops centered around public health and safety, as well as emergency preparedness and response.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT MONROE – 4 Projects: \$100,948

1. C.A.S.T. - CPR at School Training Program

Partnering ULM faculty and students with Glenwood Regional Medical Center and St. Francis Medical Center, the American Heart Association, and area schools to teach middle and high school students how to perform basic CPR.

2. Economic and Cultural Development as a Function of a Research and Development Corridor on Louisiana's Northern Frontier

Partnering ULM social sciences research faculty and students with Grambling State University, Louisiana Tech University, and area businesses to research and produce a documentary on the economic and cultural impacts of research and development using Ruston, Austin, and Fort Collins, Colorado, as models.

3. Environmental Podcasting

Partnering ULM College of Education students with Region VIII Instructional Technology Coordinators, local meteorologists and the Black Bayou Wildlife Refuge to create podcasts that address hurricane preparedness and environmental issues that would be available for Louisiana teachers to enhance classroom instruction.

4. Louisiana Lower Atmosphere Research Collaborative: Service-Learning

Partnering ULM Geosciences faculty and students with three schools in Plaquemines, LaSalle and southern Ouachita Parishes to empower K-12 students to collect information and establish a database of the lower atmosphere that would be shared with the National Weather Service and the Hurricane Prediction Center.