

Carrie L. Castille, PhD

April 7, 2025

Mr. Mark Romero  
Board of Supervisors  
University of Louisiana System  
1201 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 7-300  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am pleased to submit my application for the position of President at the University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM). As a Louisiana native and first-generation college graduate, I bring to this role more than a decade of leadership in higher education and over twenty years of service at every level of government—local, state, and federal. My career has been defined by a deep commitment to public service, a strategic approach to institutional growth, and a focus on delivering results in education, research, economic development, and community engagement. These experiences, coupled with a strong foundation in workforce and industry collaboration, uniquely position me to lead ULM into its next era of growth and impact.

My career has prepared me uniquely for this moment. In my current role supporting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with its presidential transition, I am provided support for key cabinet-level appointments while ensuring continuity of mission-critical programs in research, education, and rural development. This marks my second time participating in a federal transition, reflecting a trusted record of guiding institutions through complex and high-stakes environments.

Previously, I served as Director of USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), a presidential appointment overseeing a \$2 billion federal agency comparable in scope to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). At NIFA, I led more than 300 doctorate-level scientists while managing NIFA’s federal investments in research and education which helped build national research capacity, supported student training, and advanced solutions to pressing agricultural and economic challenges, often in partnership with the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. During my tenure, I funded 11 Artificial Intelligence Institutes totaling \$220 million as well as regional rural risk management education centers. I also established partnerships with institutions across the country—including regional universities like ULM—to build research infrastructure, connect students to hands-on learning, and elevate faculty competitiveness.

Most recently, I served as Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA), where I also held the position of Chief Academic

Officer for the Institute. At UTIA, I was entrusted with the oversight and strategic direction of the institution's academic initiatives, including all aspects of the Herbert College of Agriculture, Tennessee Ag Extension, Ag Research, and the College of Veterinary Medicine, ensuring that agriculture remained one of the leading economic drivers in the state. During my tenure, I led more than 2,400 faculty and staff and supported more than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Most importantly, my leadership contributed to a \$255 million budget, expanding academic programs, building stronger community partnerships, and improving the university's national rankings.

My public service includes leadership in Louisiana as USDA State Director for Rural Development, where I advanced economic development initiatives across the state—funding vital infrastructure, supporting small businesses and healthcare access, and investing in talent development in rural and underserved areas. During my tenure, I managed millions of dollars in federal investments across hundreds of projects, including funding that led to the construction of one of the newest hospitals serving rural Louisiana. I understand the diverse needs of our state, and I have a long track record of aligning resources with the needs of communities like those served by ULM. My experience also includes working with USDA's Farm Program and Conservation (FPAC) to support Louisiana's farmers, ranchers, and landowners—an opportunity that deepened my appreciation for the vital role agriculture plays in the economy of Northeast Louisiana and the state as a whole.

Across all of these roles, I have demonstrated the ability to lead large, complex institutions, manage significant budgets, foster public-private partnerships, facilitate meaningful change, and drive measurable outcomes. I've worked at the intersection of higher education, economic development, and public policy, and I bring a deep understanding of how universities can serve as engines of innovation, mobility, and regional prosperity.

One of my key strengths is the ability to translate strategic plans into results, turning ideas into concrete, measurable outcomes. If selected as President of ULM, I will focus on five key priorities: growing enrollment, expanding research capacity, strengthening workforce and industry partnerships, diversifying revenue streams, and reinvigorating alumni and community engagement—all while preserving and promoting a vibrant student life as an integral part of the university's identity.

**Growing Enrollment.** My own experience as a first-generation college student instilled in me a lifelong commitment to access and student success. I have led enrollment growth efforts in both higher education and federal agencies, launching student-centered programs that support academic persistence, professional preparation, and degree completion. At ULM, I will pursue a comprehensive enrollment strategy that includes outreach to traditional and nontraditional students, expanded dual enrollment opportunities, strengthened partnerships with high schools and community colleges, and targeted recruitment of first-generation students, adult learners and military-affiliated students, among others. I will also work to improve student support services and retention infrastructure to ensure that every student admitted to ULM has a clear path to success.

**Expanding Research Capacity.** I bring extensive experience managing large-scale research portfolios and securing public and private funding for academic research. At NIFA, I directed national research investments and collaborated with NSF and NIH to co-fund interdisciplinary initiatives. I also led the creation of regional centers of excellence and helped build research capacity at emerging institutions. At ULM, I will prioritize investments in faculty development, grant-writing support, and interdisciplinary research aligned with regional priorities—such as healthcare, agriculture, and technology. I believe ULM is well-positioned to become a leader in applied research that directly benefits Louisiana’s communities and industries.

**Strengthening Workforce and Industry Partnerships.** At UTIA and USDA, I led initiatives to align education with workforce needs and partnered with employers to build talent pipelines in agriculture, health, manufacturing, and technology. I worked closely with community colleges, regional employers, and state leaders to develop scalable, work-based learning opportunities and credentialing programs. At ULM, I will deepen partnerships with Louisiana Delta Community College and the business community to expand career pathways and ensure that ULM students graduate career-ready. These efforts will also support regional economic development and create stronger links between the university and the industries that power Louisiana’s economy.

**Diversifying Revenue Streams.** I have successfully managed complex budgets, including a \$2 billion federal research portfolio and institutional budgets exceeding \$255 million. I’ve led efforts to secure federal grants, philanthropic gifts, and state and local investments to advance institutional missions. As President of ULM, I will pursue a strategic financial plan that includes growing external research funding, building public-private partnerships, expanding philanthropic support, and identifying new revenue-generating opportunities across the university. This financial strategy will ensure ULM’s long-term stability and capacity to invest in students, faculty, and infrastructure.

**Reinvigorating Alumni and Community Engagement.** ULM’s alumni and community partners are essential to the university’s long-term success. I have a deep appreciation for the value of these relationships, having built extensive networks of alumni, donors, and advocates throughout my career. I will lead efforts to re-engage ULM alumni—both in Louisiana and across the country—by expanding opportunities for involvement, mentorship, and giving. I will also be an active and visible leader in Monroe and throughout the region, working with local officials, school districts, and civic organizations to strengthen ULM’s role as an anchor institution.

Finally, I believe that student life—including a strong athletics program—is an essential component of the university experience. During my time at UTIA, I worked closely with the University of Tennessee’s athletics department to foster alignment between athletics and the academic mission. I understand the power of athletics to build campus pride, engage alumni, and attract students. At ULM, I will champion a vibrant, student-centered campus environment—one where academics, athletics, and student life work together to support personal growth, school spirit, and lifelong connection.

In every role I’ve held, I have led with integrity, vision, and collaboration. I listen actively, communicate transparently, and work diligently to build a culture of trust, accountability, and shared success. ULM has a proud history and a critical role to play in Louisiana’s future. I would

be honored to lead the university as its next President and to work with the ULM community to shape a bold, collaborative, and prosperous future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to speak further and share my vision for how we can build on ULM's strong foundation to achieve new heights together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie L. Castille".

Carrie L. Castille, PhD

# CARRIE CASTILLE, PHD

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## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Decision Making

Change Management

Strategic Leadership

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Trusted leader in public research, extension and education, economic development and public policy. Results-driven, catalyst with proven success in program development and implementation. Strategic in streamlining processes while spearheading organizational changes that successfully improve performance and productivity. Seasoned professional who thrives in dynamic, demanding environments while remaining pragmatic and focused.

## CORE COMPETENCIES

- Visionary leadership
  - Key Partnership Development
  - Organizational Transition and Restructuring
  - External Relations
  - Risk Management
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Economic Development/Recovery
  - Crisis Management
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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Agriculture and Natural Resources Consultant (March 2024 to current)**

*Public policy strategic development and program development at the national, state and local level*

Clients include:

- Meridian Institute
  - Provide strategic advice on agricultural policy, research and technical assistance.
  - Support the development of tools to enhance nationwide technical assistance to support farmers, ranchers and landowners.
  - Strategic development of research priorities, identification of partnerships, and project implementation

### **United States Department of Agriculture Presidential Landing Team (November 2024 to January 2025)**

*Strategic leadership to the executive branch establishing a four-year strategic plan for the United States Department of Agriculture.*

- Selected and served as one of three advisors to the President of the United States in the areas of agriculture research, natural resources conservation and Farm Bill programs amongst others.
- Key Achievements: Selected leadership and sub-cabinet level appointment, set national policy priorities, identification of agency performance goals, major policy initiatives, internal management, legal and infrastructure challenges.

### **University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Senior Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-President and Special Advisor to the President for Agriculture Policy (July 2022 to August 2023)**

*Provide executive leadership for the delivery of AgResearch, AgExtension, Herbert College of Agriculture, and the College of Veterinary Medicine to advance agriculture and natural resources in the state of Tennessee and across the region. Provide guidance to the University of Tennessee System President of policy issues affecting agriculture.*

Leader of Tennessee Land Grant Institution

Key Achievements:

- Responsibility over 10 research and education centers, 95 county extension offices, three regional extension offices, and four 4-H centers
- Developed, led, and implemented a strategy to modernize the financial structure of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture
- Leadership in the development and implementation of state policies needed to support research, education, and extension programs and align with administrative, industry and stakeholder priorities
- Leadership across administrations to support agriculture and natural resources
- Served as a member of the University of Tennessee Chancellor's Executive Committee and University of Tennessee System President's cabinet and integrate all functions into a comprehensive program to maximize resources to address the broad strategic goals
- Solicited and aligned feedback from traditional and non-traditional agriculture stakeholders to align with university priorities

**United States Department of Agriculture**

**National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Director (January 2021 to April 2022)**

*Provide executive leadership for delivery of programs providing over \$1.9 billion in support to university partners and other cooperators and customers to advance the mission of research, education, and extension programs in the food and agricultural sciences*

Leader of USDA extramural agricultural science agency

Key Achievements:

- Developed, led, and implemented a strategy to rebuild the NIFA workforce, increasing staff to over 300 employees since taking the position, and enhance outcome-based performance and accountability process for all the major science portfolios
- Leadership in the formulation of broad, national policies needed to implement the NIFA research, education, and extension programs and align with administrative, industry and stakeholder priorities
- Leadership across administrations to support agriculture and natural resources
- Serves as a member of the USDA Secretary's Subcabinet and integrate all functions into a comprehensive program to maximize program impact to address the broad strategic goals and objectives of the Department, the Mission Area, and the agency
- Solicited and aligned feedback from traditional and non-traditional stakeholder feedback with NIFA priorities with evidence that input is incorporated in budget efforts and program requests for applications

**United States Department of Agriculture**

**Farm Production and Conservation Mid-South Coordinator (October 2019 to January 2021)**

**Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri**

*Provide executive leadership for delivery of programs providing over \$7 billion in support to farmers, ranchers and landowners.*

Cross-functional leadership in USDA Farm Services Agency, Risk Management and Natural Resources Conservation Service mission area.

Key Achievements:

- Deputy on the United States Water Task Force (created by Executive Order) to assist with the coordination and implementation of a concerted federal water initiative. Key water related issues include: water quality, water infrastructure, workforce development, water conservation and reuse, and water forecasting and research
- Developmental support and implementation in USDA Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
- Leader in the Hypoxia Task Force
- Pivotal leader in integration of the Rural Development into the Farm Production and Conservation mission areas
- Governmental affairs advisor, both legislative and congressional, with working knowledge and understanding of federal funding and federal appropriations process

## **United States Department of Agriculture**

### **State Director Louisiana Rural Development (October 2017 to October 2019)**

*Provided leadership over state level USDA Rural Development loans and grants for the expansion of economic opportunities and job creation in rural areas through a \$150 billion national portfolio.*

Direct leadership of over 70 employees in the implementation of innovative, customer-service based programs focused on the creation of rural jobs.

#### **Key Achievements:**

- In fiscal year 2018, Louisiana Rural Development nearly doubled obligations, providing over \$1 billion in support for rural broadband, healthcare, water infrastructure, community facilities and small business development.
- Advisor to the national leadership team (or: Advisor to national leadership) whose responsibilities not only included implementing streamlined business and operations systems but also facilitated a major organizational change to over 48 State Directors in the mission area.
- Developed and implemented the strategy and national effort to invest over \$3 billion of rural water infrastructure improvements in communities with populations of 10,000 or less
- Chaired and developed the Agriculture Rural Development Working Group that identified and promoted Rural Development programs to agriculture producers, ranchers, fisherman, value-added processing and agribusinesses

### **United States Department of Agriculture Presidential Landing Team (December 2016 to February 2017)**

*Strategic leadership to the executive branch establishing a four-year strategic plan for the United States Department of Agriculture.*

- Selected and served as one of three advisors to the President of the United States in the areas of agriculture research, natural resources conservation and Farm Bill programs amongst others.
- Key Achievements: Selected leadership and cabinet level appointment, set national policy priorities, identification of agency performance goals, major policy initiatives, internal management, legal and infrastructure challenges.

### **Agriculture and Natural Resources Consultant (April 2016 to November 2017)**

*Public policy strategic development and program development at the national, state and local level*

#### **Clients include:**

- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Research Foundation
  - Pest Education Activities and Research Program Coordinator
  - Educate decision makers and stakeholders to help identify, control, terminate or mitigate risks to agriculture from invasive species/pests
  - Development of a national guide for state departments of agriculture to utilize for pest mitigation resources
- USA Rice Federation

- o Represent the Louisiana rice industry including farmers, millers, and merchants and serve as the voice for the industry
- Gulf Seafood Foundation
  - o Foundation management, strategic development of research priorities, identification of partnerships and potential funding sources, and project implementation

**Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry**

**Associate Commissioner and Senior Advisor to the Commissioner (July 2008 - January 2016)**

*Leadership in education, research, and policy initiatives. Represent the department to internal and external constituents and state and federal policy makers often providing testimony to key state and congressional committees.*

Serve as senior advisor and science advisor to the Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry developing scientifically-based policy solutions.

Key Achievements:

- Member of the Commissioner’s senior leadership cabinet
- Leader in the identification, development and expansion of rural economic development programs for Louisiana communities
- Counsel and leader on internal and external state and federal policy initiatives including:
  - o Farm Bill
  - o Clean Water Act
  - o Water Resources Development Act
  - o Waters of the United States
  - o Food Safety Modernization Act
- Creation and implementation of a regional vocational agriculture and biotechnology Industry Based Certification and educational career pathway for Louisiana high school students
- Established the Lower Mississippi Valley Nutrient Management Initiative comprised of state departments of agriculture in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky
- Advised other state departments of agriculture and staff on policy-related matters

**Louisiana State University Agricultural Center**

**Assistant Professor and Agriculture and Natural Resource Program Leader (April 2007 to June 2008)**

*Provided leadership for integrated programs in renewable natural resources.*

Faculty member leading agriculture and natural resource programs in both rural and urban communities

Key Achievements:

- The instruction of diverse “students” including youth, farmers, landowners, and business owners
- Managed faculty teams that developed natural resource program curriculum, secured grant funds, and conducted statewide education and research programs, including the Louisiana Master Farmer Program, which eventually expanded to a multi-state program receiving national awards and recognition
- Developed research protocol and conducted on-farm water quality monitoring on Louisiana farms
- Provided leadership, developed water quality testing research protocol for certification, and vision at the W.H. Callegari environmental center
- Authored and co-authored numerous natural resource publications

**Louisiana State University Agricultural Center**

**Extension Associate (February 1999 to April 2007)**

*Provided vision, leadership, and guidance on re-defining the Cooperative Extension Service for the future.*



Leadership and support of LSU Ag Center agriculture and natural resource programs in both rural and urban communities

Key Achievements:

- Provided direct support for the Director and Vice-Chancellor of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
  - Executed the Lower Mississippi Valley multi-state initiative addressing environmental concerns in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri
  - Developed the curriculum, training materials and conducted educational programs for Louisiana legislators on Louisiana groundwater management and held the Louisiana Water Summit statewide conference
  - Coordinated the development of commodity-specific Best Management Practices manuals for Louisiana agriculture producers
  - Executed the Louisiana Prescribed Burn Manager Program and related curriculum and conducted training to over 1200 farmers
  - Earned Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy while providing support to the LSU AgCenter and local, state, regional and national stakeholders
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## **EDUCATION**

### **Louisiana State University**

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

College: Renewable Natural Resources

Major: Renewable Natural Resources

Emphasis: Environmental and Public Policy

### **Louisiana State University**

Degree: Master of Science

College: Institute of Environmental Studies

Major: Environmental Studies

Emphasis: Environmental policy/environmental toxicology

### **University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

Degree: Bachelor of Science

College: Engineering

Major: Industrial Engineering

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## **AWARDS**

University of Louisiana – first female inducted into the Lafayette College of Engineering Hall of Distinction (2017)

USDA Secretary’s Award for Excellence in Rural Development (2018)

USDA Secretary’s Award for Excellence (2003)

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## **RECENT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES**

Deputy, United States Water Subcabinet (October 2019 to January 2021)

USDA Representative on Hypoxia Task Force (October 2019 to January 2021)

C. Castille

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Board on Chemical Sciences and Technology Study Panel: Reducing the Threat of Improvised Explosive Device Attacks by Restricting Access to Chemical Explosive Precursors (October 2016 to October 2017)

Member, National Council for Environmental Policy and Technology - appointed by EPA Secretary Gina McCarthy (September 2014 to November 2015)

Member, USA Rice Federation Sustainability Task Force (August 2013 to October 2017)

Member, USA Rice Federation Regulatory Affairs and Food Safety Committee (August 2013 to October 2017)

Member, United States Business and Industry Council Water Synergy Project board (August 2013 to November 2015)

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## **RECENT STATE LEADERSHIP ROLES**

Member, Postsecondary Education Agriculture Technology Study Commission (July 2019 to October 2017)

Co-Chair, Louisiana Food Safety Modernization Act Study Commission (July 2014 to November 2015)

Co-Chair, Louisiana Farm to School Task Force (July 2014 to November 2015)

Member, Louisiana Board of International Commerce (July 2013 to November 2015)

Co-Chair, Louisiana Agriculture and Forestry Nutrient Management Task Force (October 2012 to November 2015)

Member, Louisiana Nutrient Management Strategy Team (July 2012 to November 2015)

Member, False River Watershed Council (July 2012 to November 2015)

Chair, Southern United States Trade Association Operations Committee (February 2011 to February 2013)

Chair, Louisiana Sustainable Food Policy Council (July 2010 to January 2012)

Member, Governor's Shrimp Advisory Task Force (2009 to November 2015)

Fellow, Food Systems Leadership Institute (January 2009 to December 2011)

Fellow, US Rice Federation Leadership Program (January 2008 to December 2010)

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## **RECENT HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ROLES**

Chair, National Agriculture Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board appointed by USDA Secretary Vilsack (September 2010 to April 2017)

Member, NAREEE Advisory Board Data Management Working Group (August 2014 to April 2017)

Member, American Public Land Grant Universities Council on Agriculture Research, Extension and Teaching – representing Natural Resource Conservation associations (January 2014 to April 2017)

Member, Louisiana Agriculture Education Commission (January 2014 to October 2017)

Chair, NAREEE Advisory Board Relevancy and Adequacy Committee (November 2013 to April 2017)

Member, NAREEE Advisory Board Data Management Working Group (August 2014 to April 2017)

Chair, National Agriculture Research Extension Education and Economics Board Renewable Energy Committee (October 2010 April 2017)

Member, National Food Animal Veterinary Institute Board of Directors (January 2010 to November 2015)

Member, Tulane University Nutrient Prize Advisory Team (November 2014 to November 2015)

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## PUBLICATIONS

- Dissolved Oxygen*. LeBlanc, B. D. and C. Castille. LSU AgCenter Number 2994-B. 2p. 2007.
- Fecal Coliforms*. LeBlanc, B. D. and C. Castille. LSU AgCenter Number 2994-C. 2p. 2007.
- Nutrient Impairments*. LeBlanc, B. D. and C. Castille. LSU AgCenter Number 2994-G. 2p. 2007
- Factors Influencing Participation in Environmental Stewardship Programs: A Case Study of the Agricultural and Forestry Sectors in Louisiana*, C. Castille. Louisiana State University. 2007
- Sedimentation Impairments*. LeBlanc, B. D. and C. Castille. LSU AgCenter Number 2994-L. 1p. 2007.
- A Manual for Understanding and Preventing Water Pollution from Home Sources*. LeBlanc, B.D., C. Castille, T. Koske, M. Frey, M. Stoker, and R. Hendrick. LSU AgCenter Number 2994.pp-1-27.
- A Guide to Louisiana-Friendly Landscaping*. Branch, B., B. Carney, C. Castille, D. Cummings, D. Ferrin, B. Fletcher, S. Gauthier, D. Gill, H. Harrison, J. Kaster, T. Koske, B. LeBlanc, A. Owings, D. Pollet, D. Reed, R. Schmit, J. Stevens, and R. Strahan. 2007. LSU AgCenter Number 2993.pp-1-88.
- Promoting BMPs through the Master Farmer Program*. Watershed and Wet Weather Technical Bulletin. Water Environmental Federation. Volume 12, Number 1. January/February 2007.
- Louisiana Lawn Best Management Practices (BMPs)*. 2006 (with Koske, Thomas J., Pollet, C. Castille, Dale., Hollier, Clayton., Strahan, Ron)
- Updated TMDL Facts*. C. Castille. 2006.
- Master Farmer Program: Learning Best Management Practices*. Louisiana Agriculture Magazine. Sanders, F and C. Castille. Spring 2004.
- The Do's and Don't's of Working with Local Communities: Tips for Successful Community-Based Public Meetings*. Journal of Extension, April 2003. Coreil, P. and Castille. C.
- Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative*. Castille, C. 2002.
- Louisiana Master Farmer Program*. Castille, C. 2001.
- TMDL Facts*. Castille, C. 2001.
- Water Use and Rights in Louisiana*. Castille, C. 2001.