



MCNEESE
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STATE UNIVERSITY

Presidential Leadership Profile

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA
— — — — —
S Y S T E M



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The next president of McNeese State University will be a dynamic, student-centered, and visionary leader committed to advancing the university's mission as a cornerstone of academic excellence, regional development, and community engagement in Southwest Louisiana. As a proud member of the University of Louisiana System, McNeese plays a vital role in preparing students for success through high-quality education, applied research, and meaningful partnerships that drive economic and cultural vitality across the region.

McNeese seeks a president who will champion innovation, strengthen academic and workforce programs, and foster a campus culture rooted in inclusion, collaboration, and resilience. The president will be expected to lead with integrity and transparency, aligning institutional priorities with long-term strategic goals while navigating the evolving landscape of public higher education.

As the university's chief ambassador, the president will engage actively with students, faculty, staff, alumni, business leaders, elected officials, and community stakeholders. The successful candidate will be a passionate advocate for McNeese's mission, committed to expanding access, enhancing student outcomes, and securing the university's financial sustainability through strategic partnerships, philanthropy, and resource development.

History of the Institution and Region

McNeese State University is located in Lake Charles and serves as a leading regional university for Southwest Louisiana, home to a strong energy economy, major industry, and growing health and education sectors. Established by the Louisiana Legislature in 1939 to expand access to public higher education, McNeese was created with a clear and enduring purpose: to serve the people, industries, and communities of this vital part of the state.

From its earliest days, the university's mission has reflected the needs and aspirations of the region, preparing students to contribute to the economic vitality, cultural life, and workforce priorities of Southwest Louisiana. What began as a small junior college has grown steadily into one of Louisiana's key comprehensive public universities, with academic strengths spanning the liberal arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, and the health professions, preparing graduates for leadership and high demand careers across the region. That impact is evident in McNeese's role as a talent anchor for Southwest Louisiana, with 60 percent of students remaining in the region after graduation.

The institution was renamed early in its history to honor John McNeese, a pioneering educator whose legacy reflects the university's belief in education as a public good and a driver of opportunity. As Southwest Louisiana expanded through industrial growth and regional innovation, McNeese evolved alongside it, transitioning to a four year institution, broadening its academic and professional offerings, and strengthening its capacity to meet the needs of a dynamic and changing state.

Today, McNeese stands as a cornerstone of higher education in Louisiana, defined by student success, regional partnership, and forward momentum, positioning the university for continued growth and impact in the decades ahead.



ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

McNeese State University offers a comprehensive and diverse academic portfolio designed to meet the evolving needs of students and the region. The university provides 47 degree programs, including 33 undergraduate offerings with one associate degree and 32 baccalaureate programs, along with 14 graduate programs consisting of 13 master's degrees and one doctoral degree. In addition, McNeese offers 16 certificate programs, including 14 at the undergraduate level and 2 at the graduate level, providing students with flexible, career-focused opportunities that support academic excellence, workforce development, and student success.

College of Business

- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA): Accounting, Business Administration, Finance, Management, Marketing
- Undergraduate Certificate (UC): Liquefied Natural Gas Business
- Master of Business Administration (MBA): Business Administration

Burton College of Education

- Bachelor of Science (BS): Early Childhood Education Grades PK-3, Elementary Education Grades 1-5, Kinesiology
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC): Early Childhood Education Grades PK-3, Elementary Education Grades 1-5, School Librarian, Secondary Education Grades 6-12 (Agriculture, Biology, Business, Chemistry, English, Environmental Science, General Science, Mathematics, Social Studies)
- Master of Education (MEd): Curriculum and Instruction
- Master of Science (MS): Kinesiology

College of Engineering and Sciences

- Bachelor of Science (BS): Agricultural Sciences, Biological Science, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematical Sciences, Natural Resource Conservation Management
- Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering (BSChE): Chemical Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (BSME): Mechanical Engineering
- Master of Engineering (MEng): Engineering
- Master of Science (MS): Environmental and Chemical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Nutritional Sciences
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in LNG Engineering

College of Liberal Arts

- Associate of General Studies (AGS): General Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (BA): Art, English, History, Humanities, Political Science, Sociology
- Bachelor of General Studies (BGS): General Studies



- Bachelor of Music (BM): Music
- Bachelor of Science (BS): Criminal Justice, Mass Communication
- Master of Arts (MA): English
- Master of Science (MS): Criminal Justice
- Master of Fine Arts (MFA): Creative Writing

College of Nursing and Health Professions

- Bachelor of Science (BS): Health Systems Management, Medical Laboratory Science, Psychology, Radiologic Sciences
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN): Nursing
- Master of Science (MS): Applied Behavior Analysis, Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN): Nursing
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP): Advanced Practice Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing
- Post-Master's Certificate (PMC): Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner and Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

The Next President

The next president of McNeese State University will be a visionary, student centered leader prepared to build on the university's strong foundation of regional impact, academic excellence, and deep community connection in Lake Charles and Southwest Louisiana. Reporting to the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors, the president will provide strategic leadership for enrollment and student success, academic quality, fiscal stewardship, and workforce aligned partnerships that support the continued growth and vitality of the institution. McNeese seeks a collaborative and values driven leader who will engage faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community stakeholders in advancing the university's mission and positioning McNeese for long term success and opportunity.

EMPLOYEE DATA

The institution employs 236 full-time and 154 part-time faculty members, excluding graduate assistants. Additionally, the staff includes 333 full-time and 8 part-time employees, also excluding graduate assistants.



OPERATING BUDGET

McNeese State University's FY26 operating budget is \$78,418,575, with 63% allocated to the university's core mission—student instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, and scholarships. The remaining 37% supports institutional services, plant operations, and agency transfers.

Funding Sources

69% from tuition and fees (self-generated)

31% from state funds

State Appropriations (budgeted)	\$ 23,987,626
Transfers	\$ 54,430,949
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 78,418,575

*Total reflects all sources of revenue, including restricted and unrestricted.

Budget Allocation Breakdown

Instruction: 42%

Academic Support: 8%

Student Services: 6%

Institutional Services: 11%

Scholarships: 8%

Plant Operations: 12%

Transfers: 14%

Additional Budgets

Auxiliary Services: \$ 4,150,271 (student union, recreation, food services, bookstore, etc.)

Athletics: \$ 15,082,762 (salaries, scholarships, travel, equipment, operations, etc.)

Housing managed by a third party affiliates: \$ 1,865,000

Annual Undergraduate Tuition & Costs

Tuition Only:

In-State: \$ 5,148

Out-of-State: \$ 5,148

Total Cost (Tuition, Fees, Room & Board):

In-State: \$ 20,542

Out-of-State: \$ 22,542

Endowment

McNeese's endowment exceeds \$ 91.4 million.

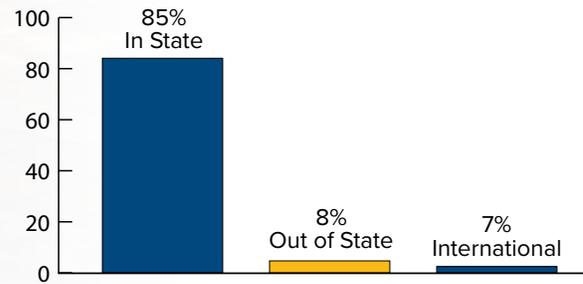
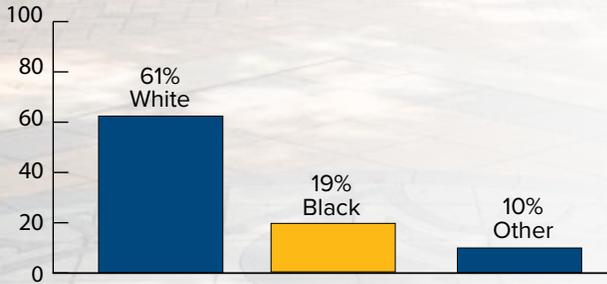
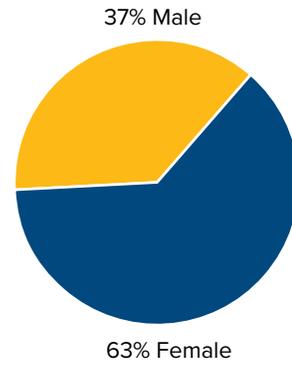
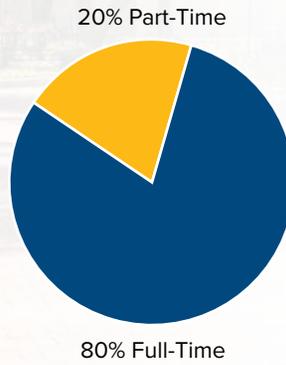
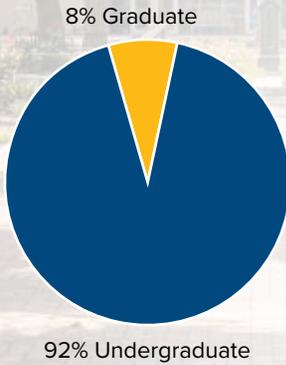


ENROLLMENT

McNeese State University experienced a 5% increase in enrollment for the Fall 2025 semester. The university also welcomed its largest first-time freshman class in many years, with a 13.3% increase over last year.

6,556

Fall 2025 End-of-Term Enrollment



63.1% of Fall 2025 enrollment comes from the five-parish service area of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis parishes.

RETENTION

McNeese State University reported a 68% first-time, full-time retention rate for the fall 2025.



RESEARCH WITH IMPACT

McNeese State University, located in Lake Charles, Louisiana, is a dynamic institution recognized for its growing research enterprise and commitment to applied, community-focused innovation. While McNeese is not currently classified as a Carnegie R1 or R2 research institution, it has demonstrated significant momentum in research development, particularly in energy, engineering, behavioral sciences, and STEM education.

Federal Designation and National Recognition

In 2025, McNeese was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) as the site of the National Center of Excellence for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Safety. This designation, mandated by the PIPES Act of 2020, positions McNeese as a national leader in LNG safety research, training, and regulatory coordination. The Center will serve as a hub for collaboration among federal agencies, industry, and academia, advancing the United States' leadership in LNG operations.

Research Funding Overview

McNeese's research portfolio includes a diverse array of projects funded by federal, state, and private sources, totaling millions in active grants. Highlights include:

Federal Funding:

Title III Project – Cowboy Way: McNeese First Year Experience: \$ 2,220,500
Upward Bound (2022–2027): U.S. Department of Education: \$ 1,918,975
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program: USDA/LDAF: \$ 51,000
NSF Future Use of Energy in Louisiana \$19,125

State Funding:

Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership – LPN to BSN: \$ 501,214
LEQSF (Engineering, Sciences and Behavioral Health): \$ 518,277
Cybersecurity Education Enhancement: \$ 105,773
Louisiana Soybean and Grain Research: \$ 44,400
LCTCS \$20,000
Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority \$30,000
Board of Regents: Postsecondary Inclusion-Preparing Responsible Individuals and Motivating for Excellence (PRIME) \$80,000
Board of Regents: IGNITE \$40,000
Board of Regents: GRASS \$10,000
Board of Regents: CUF \$1854
LaACES \$16,000
La. Sea Grant \$20,000



Private Funding:

Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute Studio: \$ 100,000

NPCA Foundation PCI Studio: \$ 47,652

LUMCON (La. Universities Marine Consortium) \$15,000

Council on Library Information Resources \$103,860

Mathematical Association of America \$5,000

Woodside Energy \$25,690

Types of Research Activities

- McNeese's research spans a wide range of disciplines, including:
- Energy and Environmental Safety: LNG safety, PFAS remediation, climate-smart agriculture.
- STEM Education and Outreach: Dual enrollment, open educational resources, and K–12 STEM engagement.
- Behavioral and Health Sciences: VR-based training for psychiatric nurses, counseling technology, and inclusion programs.

Engineering and Materials Science: Structural testing, electrochemical sensing, and civil engineering innovation.

Notable High-Impact Initiatives

PHMSA LNG Center of Excellence: A flagship initiative with national implications for energy safety and workforce development.

Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership: Addressing critical nursing shortages through innovative LPN-to-BSN pathways.

Some supportive links:

- [Transportation Secretary Duffy and Sen. Kennedy Announce New LNG Project As America Is Building Again](#)
- [McNeese Receives a \\$2.2 Million Grant](#)
- [Upward Bound at McNeese Awarded \\$1.9 Million Grant](#)



ATHLETICS

McNeese Athletics comprises of 398 student-athletes that compete in 15 NCAA Division I sports. McNeese is the longest-running member of the Southland Conference, entering its 54th-season in 2025-26, and is located in Lake Charles, Louisiana, the heart of Southwest Louisiana.

Cowboys & Cowgirls

Year-in and year-out, McNeese prides itself with the work being done by its student-athletes on the field or court of competition, in the classroom, and in the community.

- A total of 221 student-athletes were listed on the Southland Conference Commissioner's Academic Fall and Spring Honor Rolls (109 in the fall of 2024 and 112 in the spring of 2025).
- 43 student-athletes compiled a perfect 4.0 grade point average.
- 68 student-athletes earned their degrees in 2024-25.
- A total of 4,800 community service hours volunteered during the academic season.

For over five decades, the McNeese Athletic Department has been the driving force and defining presence in the Southland Conference.

- Men's Basketball won back-to-back SLC regular season and tournament titles (2024–2025) and earned NCAA Tournament bids both years, including the program's first NCAA Tournament win with a first-round upset of Clemson.
- Softball captured its fourth straight SLC regular season championship and recorded 40+ wins for the fourth consecutive year.
- In just its second season, Beach Volleyball earned its first SLC Tournament championship
- McNeese led the conference in attendance for football, men's and women's basketball, and softball.
- Football head coach Matt Viator ranks No. 2 all-time in SLC wins and is a three-time SLC Coach of the Year.
- Baseball head coach Justin Hill ranks 7th all-time in SLC wins and is a two-time Coach of the Year.
- Softball head coach James Landreneau ranks 7th all-time in conference wins and is a four-time Coach of the Year.
- McNeese Football holds a league-record 14 championships, 16 FCS playoff appearances, and two FCS National Championship game appearances (1997, 2002)



OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

The next president of McNeese State University will be expected to:

Advance Student Success and Access

Champion initiatives that improve student recruitment, retention, and graduation rates, with a focus on equity, affordability, and career readiness for all students.

Strengthen Academic Excellence and Innovation

Support faculty development, academic program growth, and interdisciplinary collaboration that align with regional workforce needs and emerging industries.

Enhance Community and Industry Partnerships

Deepen McNeese's role as a driver of economic development by cultivating partnerships with local businesses, industries, and civic organizations to expand experiential learning, research, and innovation.

Promote a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging

Foster a welcoming and inclusive campus environment that values diverse perspectives, shared governance, and student engagement.

Ensure Financial Sustainability and Growth

Lead strategic efforts in budgeting, fundraising, and resource allocation to strengthen the university's financial position and long-term viability.

Elevate McNeese's Regional and Statewide Impact

Serve as a visible and engaged leader who advocates for McNeese at the local, state, and national levels, reinforcing its identity as a vital institution serving Southwest Louisiana.

Support Athletics and Student Life

Embrace the role of athletics and student life in building school spirit, community pride, and a vibrant campus experience.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Professional Qualifications

The next president of McNeese State University should possess:

- **Academic and Executive Leadership:** An earned doctorate from an accredited institution (preferred) and a demonstrated record of successful senior leadership experience in higher education or related sectors, with the credentials to earn the respect of the academic community.
- **Strategic and Financial Stewardship:** Proven expertise in managing complex budgets, resource development, and institutional advancement to ensure financial sustainability and strategic growth.



- **Commitment to Academic and Workforce Excellence:** A deep understanding of the academic enterprise, including undergraduate and graduate education, and a strong commitment to faculty success, student learning, and workforce alignment.
- **Student Success and Equity Focus:** A demonstrated commitment to supporting student access, retention, and success across all student demographics, particularly first-generation and underserved populations.
- **External Engagement and Advocacy:** The ability to effectively advocate for the university at the state, regional, and national levels, and to cultivate strong partnerships with elected officials, alumni, donors, business leaders, and community stakeholders.
- **Athletics and Institutional Mission:** A clear understanding of the role of intercollegiate athletics within a comprehensive university and the capacity to support its integration with the broader academic and student life experience.
- **Philanthropy and Fundraising:** A successful track record in attracting external funding through philanthropy, public-private partnerships, and grants to advance institutional priorities.
- **Understanding of McNeese's Role and Mission:** An appreciation for McNeese's identity as a regional university committed to academic excellence, community service, and economic development in Southwest Louisiana.
- **Collaborative and Regional Partnership Building:** A strong history of fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, campus unity, and regional alliances that enhance educational, workforce, and economic opportunities.

Personal Qualities

The successful candidate will exemplify:

- **Visionary and Innovative Thinking:** A bold and entrepreneurial approach to leadership, with the foresight to guide McNeese through a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.
- **Inclusive and Collaborative Leadership:** An authentic and engaging leadership style that builds trust, fosters inclusion, and values shared governance and diverse perspectives.
- **Transparent and Effective Communication:** Exceptional communication skills and a commitment to openness, accountability, and integrity in all decision-making processes.
- **Cultural Appreciation and Regional Engagement:** A genuine respect for the cultural heritage of Southwest Louisiana and an enthusiasm for McNeese's role in preserving and celebrating the region's identity through education, the arts, and public service.
- **Dedication to Community and Civic Impact:** A passion for strengthening the university's impact across the region through partnerships, service, and outreach.
- **Stability and Resilience:** A steady, principled, and long-term commitment to the university's success, with the ability to navigate challenges and inspire confidence in times of change.



PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. For best consideration, candidate materials should be received by **Friday, May 1, 2026**.

Application materials should be submitted to:
mcneesepresidentialsearch@ulsystem.edu

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:
[Erica Calais, Ed.D., mcneesepresidentialsearch@ulsystem.edu](mailto:Erica.Calais@ulsystem.edu)



MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

Our mission is to deliver a life-changing higher education experience by fostering a dynamic teaching and learning community committed to excellence with a personal touch.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be the premier regional university in Louisiana and Southeast Texas, recognized for excellence in academic programs, scholarship, student success, and impactful community engagement.

University Values

McNeese State University upholds six core values that shape our actions and guide decision-making:

- **Student-Centric:** We prioritize students at the core of everything we do, dedicating ourselves to their academic achievement, personal development, and overall well-being.
- **Adaptable:** We embrace change and continuously evolve to meet the challenges of a dynamic world.
- **Collaborative:** We cultivate partnerships and teamwork across disciplines and communities to drive progress and innovation.
- **Transparent:** We foster trust and understanding by communicating openly and honestly.
- **Accountable:** We hold ourselves responsible for achieving excellence in all aspects of our work.
- **Accommodating:** We foster an environment that supports and respects the needs of individuals, ensuring access and opportunity for all.

At McNeese State University, we foster an adaptable and collaborative environment where innovation and teamwork drive progress. We are student-centric in all we do, ensuring that our actions support student success and well-being.

Five-Year Strategic Plan (2024-2029)

Goal 1: Stabilize Enrollment

1. Each year, increase fall-to-fall enrollment from the 2023 enrollment baseline of 6,061.
2. Each year, improve the first-time freshman retention rate from our baseline measure of 69%.
3. Each year, increase 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates from the baselines for the Fall 2017 cohort of 34%, 47%, and 51%, respectively.
4. Establish a tracking system to evaluate job placement and graduate and professional school acceptance across disciplines.

Goal 2: Create a Thriving Learning Community for Student Achievement

1. Ensure each campus unit defines and delivers services that reinforce student success.
2. Increase the number of experiential learning opportunities (e.g., hands-on projects, internships) across campus.
3. Provide support services that meet student needs.



Goal 3: Enhance Internal and External Collaboration and Communication

1. Develop and sustain partnerships with professionals and employers to ensure curricula remain relevant for the workforce.
2. Increase brand awareness by promoting student, staff, faculty, and alumni achievement.
3. Implement a comprehensive communication plan to educate employees on how funding is allocated to support the institution's mission and operations.

Goal 4: Expand Support for Faculty and Staff

1. Explore opportunities to address faculty and staff pay and increase average compensation by 2029, subject to funding availability.
2. Seek additional funding for professional development.
3. Provide internal and external professional development opportunities tailored to faculty and staff needs.
4. Establish a structured onboarding process for all new faculty and staff.

Governance, Councils, and Institutional Impact

McNeese State University is governed by the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors, which holds fiduciary responsibility and broad policy authority for the nine member institutions of the System. The president serves as the chief executive officer of the university and provides leadership for institutional strategy, academic quality, enrollment and student success, fiscal stewardship, and community engagement in support of McNeese's mission in Lake Charles and Southwest Louisiana.

The university's executive leadership is organized through the President's Cabinet and Executive Leadership Team, which support coordinated planning, budgeting, resource allocation, policy development, and institutional effectiveness. Key members of the executive leadership team include:

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Business Affairs
- Senior Vice President for Student Affairs
- Athletic Director

McNeese maintains an active shared governance structure grounded in collaboration and campus voice. The Faculty Senate serves as the representative body of the faculty, advising on academic policy, curriculum, and matters of faculty welfare. Staff participation is supported through the Staff Senate, which elevates employee perspectives and strengthens institutional community. The Student Government Association represents the student body and contributes to leadership development, student engagement, and ongoing dialogue with university leadership.

Together, these governance and advisory bodies support transparency, engagement, and institutional stewardship, ensuring McNeese remains responsive to its students, its employees, and the communities it serves.