2025-2030

Strategic Plan

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

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Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the hundreds of individuals whose insights, energy, and commitment shaped this strategic plan. This comprehensive effort reflects the collective wisdom and guidance of the University of Louisiana System's (UL System) Management and Leadership Institute (M&LI) members; university presidents; priority area task force participants; UL System Board of Supervisors; faculty, staff, and students across UL System institutions; and the dedicated team at the UL System.

We deeply appreciate the many stakeholders who engaged in this process – your voices added essential perspective and reinforced the collaborative spirit of our work. We gathered input from every level of our System through interviews, surveys, task forces, and a retreat, resulting in a strategic plan that represents the aspirations, values, and vision of our state and UL System community.

Your contributions have informed the direction of this plan and built a strong foundation for the future, one grounded in shared purpose and a commitment to lasting impact.

Dear University of Louisiana System Community,

Since stepping into the role of president, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the extraordinary work happening across our nine institutions. Though my time in this position has been brief, one thing is clear: the University of Louisiana System is a powerful force for our state's transformation, opportunity, and progress. Every day, I am inspired by the dedication of our faculty, staff, students, and partners who bring our mission to life.

As we look ahead, we do so in a time of change, shaped by shifting economic landscapes, evolving industry needs, and new expectations for higher education. While circumstances may fluctuate, our purpose remains steadfast – to empower our students and drive meaningful outcomes for Louisiana. This strategic plan is a testament to that commitment.

This plan is more than a document. It is our roadmap for the future. It reflects a bold, unified vision for the UL System that builds on the strengths of our institutions while advancing academic innovation, expanding opportunities, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring student success. It also reinforces our responsibility to align academic pathways with economic needs to prepare our graduates to lead, serve, and contribute meaningfully to Louisiana's prosperity.

Shaped by the insights and expertise of those who know our institutions best, community involvement was critical to the success of this process. I extend my sincere gratitude to our UL System staff and board members; university presidents, faculty, staff, and students; and external partners whose contributions were instrumental in its development. Through a rigorous, collaborative process, we gathered various perspectives to ensure the plan is reflective of the needs and aspirations of our entire UL System community.

To our students: you are at the heart of everything we do. We want you to be proud not only to attend an institution in our System, but also to graduate knowing you have had one of the best educational experiences in the country. Your time here should be transformational, opening doors to careers, connections, and opportunities that shape your future. Our commitment is to provide an education that equips you with the knowledge, skills, and support to thrive – both while you are here and long after graduation.

Our System is unique in its ability to serve a broad student population across nine institutions, each with its own identity, yet united by a shared mission. Collaboration is key to our success, and achieving our goals requires the collective efforts of our institutions, industry leaders, government partners, and the communities we serve. We are committed to enhancing support for our institutions and exploring opportunities for greater efficiency and coordination so our institutions can operate at their highest potential and responsibly use the public and private support entrusted to us.

I am energized by the passion and dedication across our institutions, and I look forward to what the future holds for our students, institutions, and state. I invite you – our students, parents, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members – to engage with our System as we implement this plan and play an active role in shaping the future of Louisiana.
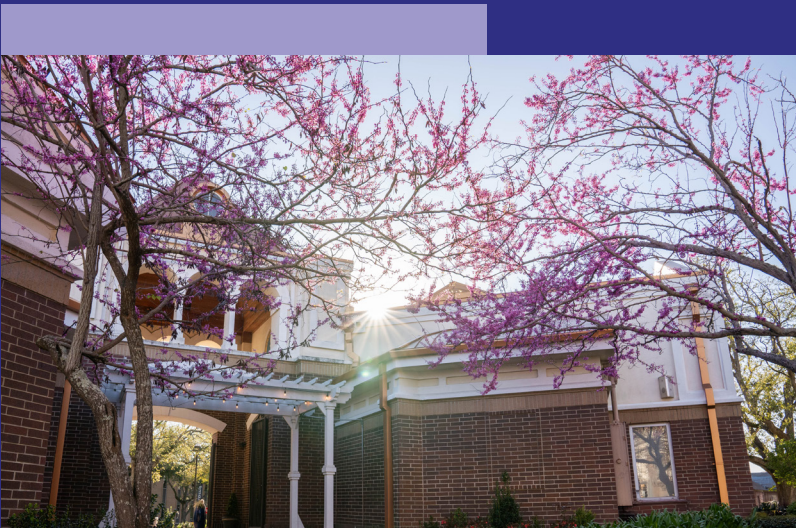
Together, we will make a lasting impact.

Rick Gallot

President and CEO
University of Louisiana System

Executive Summary

ONE SYSTEM. ONE MISSION.

The University of Louisiana System[1] strategic plan reflects a unified commitment to strengthening higher education in Louisiana through System-wide coordination, accountability, advocacy, and strategic collaboration. As the largest four-year system in Louisiana and one of the largest public university systems in the country, our System plays a critical role in ensuring its nine member institutions operate efficiently, serve students effectively, and contribute meaningfully to Louisiana's communities and economies. This plan outlines key priorities to guide our System's efforts to create opportunities, foster innovation, and advance policies and programs that support the success of its institutions and the communities they serve.

1   During the 2025 Regular Legislative Session, under Senate Bill 202, the transfer of the University of New Orleans to the Louisiana State University System was approved. Despite the transference, this strategic plan is intended to be a living document, adaptable to all changes made to the University of Louisiana System.

Executive Summary

System-Wide Access and Affordability

The UL System is committed to providing access to higher education and expanding its impact by implementing strategies to boost enrollment across its institutions. To increase our impact on the state, our System-wide efforts focus on addressing financial barriers, improving transfer pathways between institutions, and promoting affordability measures to help ensure higher education remains accessible to all Louisianans – including providing a path back into college for Louisiana's more than 600,000 residents who have earned some college credit, but no degree.

Talent and Economic Development for Louisiana

The UL System is a pivotal strategic partner in Louisiana's focus on talent and economic development. By developing and aligning academic programs with current and future industry needs, fostering statewide partnerships, and securing resources to support high-demand fields, our System ensures its institutions remain agile and responsive to the evolving job market. We serve students from every corner of the state, and from communities beyond our state lines, making it critically important for our programs to educate and prepare every learner for career and professional success. Through targeted initiatives, our System drives innovation, supports cutting-edge research that clearly impacts Louisiana economies and communities, and promotes entrepreneurship to reinforce higher education's critical role as a catalyst for economic growth.[2]

Strategic Driver of Student Success

As the management body for its nine institutions, our System drives initiatives that significantly improve student outcomes across all institutions. System-wide efforts prioritize increasing retention and graduation rates, expanding student support services, and ensuring institutions have the resources needed to foster student success. This includes strengthening holistic advising, supporting transfer students, aligning academic programs with industry needs, improving shared services and data systems, and revising policies to remove barriers to completion. The UL System also supports early outreach to middle and high school students through community engagement, scholarships, and campus events that build long-term interest in higher education. By facilitating collaboration, sharing best practices, and championing strategies that advance student achievement, the UL System enhances the educational experience for all students and reinforces its commitment to excellence.

Commitment to Service and Engagement

At the heart of the UL System is a commitment to fostering a culture of engagement that values the contributions of every individual within our academic community, and by promoting collaboration and open communication, we create an environment where students, faculty, and staff can excel and reach their full potential. Our System-wide initiatives are designed to provide the necessary resources, support, and opportunities for success, enhancing the educational experience and equipping graduates to meaningfully contribute to a dynamic society.

2   Figure 1. Economic Impact of the University of Louisiana System. Source: University of Louisiana System. (2025). The economic value of the University of Louisiana System.

System Efficiency and Institutional Sustainability

Ensuring the long-term stability and efficacy of Louisiana's public institutions requires disciplined oversight, strong financial stewardship, and a focus on operational excellence. Our System will work to drive efficiencies across all institutions by streamlining administrative processes, advocating for sustainable funding models, and supporting institutions in optimizing their resources. Through strategic use of economies of scale, securing external funding, and making thoughtful and responsible investments, we will strengthen the long-term resilience of our institutions while maximizing the impact of public higher education.

Prepared to Lead

The UL System is not just a collection of institutions – it is one System with one mission – a shared commitment to strong oversight, strategic advocacy, and support for its institutions. By prioritizing access, student success, talent alignment, innovation, and sustainability, our System is dedicated to ensuring its public institutions remain resilient and equipped to transform lives, preparing students to lead, serve, and elevate the state while driving economic growth and strengthening communities for generations.

Introduction

The University of Louisiana System is the state's largest higher education network, bringing together nine distinct institutions: Grambling State University, Louisiana Tech University, McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and the University of New Orleans. Collectively, we serve more than 83,000 students, offering unique programs that meet the evolving needs of Louisiana residents and attract students from across the country.

In August 2024, our System launched a bold and collaborative strategic planning process with a singular goal to shape a shared vision for the future that reflects the collective wisdom, aspirations, and strength of our UL System community. This effort, grounded in the principle of **One System, One Mission,** brought together voices from every corner of our System, including vital input from faculty, staff, institutional leaders, student government associations, and students.

Input and insights from board members, university presidents, System staff, community partners, and external stakeholders provided further depth around the future of our System and how we should position ourselves to continue meeting the needs of the people, communities, and economies we serve, both in Louisiana and beyond. The heart of this process was our System's M&LI, a cohort of mid-career faculty and staff committed to leading from within. Their work in stakeholder engagement and issue identification was instrumental in shaping the plan's foundation and future.

In early 2025, collaboration advanced through the formation of task forces focused on four strategic priorities identified during the fall planning timeframe. These teams, composed of industry professionals and campus representatives, collaborated to translate insights into innovative, practical strategies rooted in regional and statewide impact.

To ensure internal alignment with institutional needs, our System conducted a System-wide organizational assessment informed by research on peer systems and feedback from staff, university leaders, and stakeholders, reinforcing our commitment to continuous improvement and adaptive leadership.

What emerged from this iterative, engaging process is more than a roadmap – it's a reflection of what we can achieve when we move forward together, standing as a testament to the power of collaboration across institutions, sectors, and communities. Unified by purpose and shared responsibility, we are better positioned than ever to be an exemplar of a higher education system rising to meet the needs of today's learners, enhancing our impact, and fueling the future of Louisiana.

MISSION

The University of Louisiana System unites nine institutions with a shared commitment to transforming lives through education and preparing its students to lead, serve, and elevate our state. We deliver high-quality learning, align academic programs with industry demands, and drive innovation that strengthens Louisiana's communities and fuels economic growth statewide and beyond.

VISION

The University of Louisiana System shapes the future of Louisiana through a unified approach to education, working as one to enhance access, drive innovation, strengthen partnerships, foster research, and grow a skilled talent pipeline.

VALUES

Opportunity

Education should be within reach for all students. We are committed to expanding access to education through flexible learning options, financial support, and outreach initiatives that help all students achieve their goals.

Communication

Clear and effective communication is essential to student success. We prioritize transparency, engagement, and accessibility in all aspects of learning to ensure students, faculty, and stakeholders stay informed and connected.

Collaboration

Strong partnerships across institutions, industries, and communities create meaningful opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders. We work together to enhance academic experiences, drive research, and address the evolving needs of Louisiana's communities.

Innovation

As the world evolves, so must education. We champion innovation in academic programs, research, and technology to prepare students for the careers of tomorrow. Our institutions are at the forefront of discovery, creativity, and problem-solving.

Preparation

Students should be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to make a lasting impact. Industry partnerships, applied experiences, innovative curricula, and research prepare students to contribute to Louisiana's economy and communities.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Strategic Plan Framework

Our strategic plan is built on a framework focused on four key priority areas designed to drive growth and impact for the UL System and its institutions. Each priority is anchored by a clear imperative – an actionable goal that serves as a benchmark for success. Targeted strategies will guide our efforts over the next five years to achieve these goals, supported by metrics that ensure accountability, track progress, and allow for timely adjustments to maintain focus and effectiveness throughout implementation. In many cases, baselines for metrics identified in this plan may not currently exist. In others, they should be assessed relative to prior performance, peer systems, and more. As baselines are known and comparisons are determined, the System can set year-over-year goals to measure and report on our progress and continually ensure alignment with each of our strategic imperatives.

Operational Efficiency and Excellence

Leverage the UL System's scale to drive operational efficiencies, standardize administrative processes, and strategically invest in shared services that reduce costs, increase institutional capacity, and uphold fiscal responsibility across all institutions.
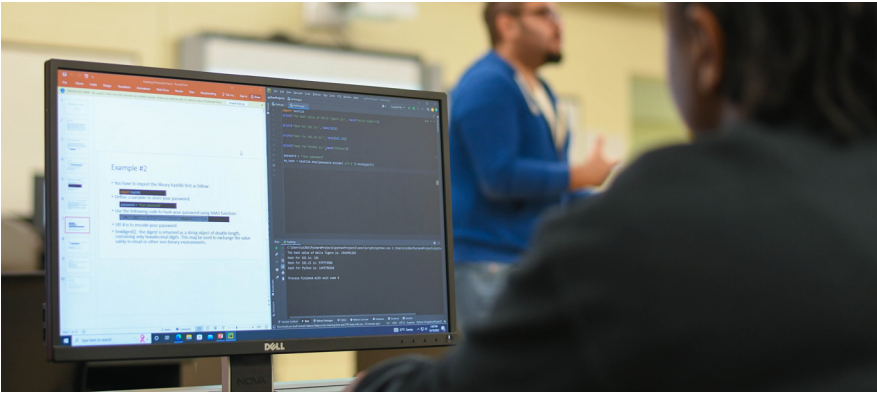
As a system housing nine unique institutions, the strategic coordination of operations and thoughtful deployment of shared services are essential to sustaining our impact and ensuring long-term financial stability. In a higher education landscape shaped by fluctuating funding and increased demand for operational excellence, maximizing the impact of every dollar and reducing unnecessary duplication across institutions are System-wide imperatives.

By aligning financial management practices, leveraging collective purchasing power, and centralizing select administrative services, our System can reduce costs, improve service delivery, and reinvest savings into mission-critical areas such as academic innovation, economic prosperity, and student success. A strong commitment to fiscal responsibility will guide these efforts to achieve cost savings that enhance rather than compromise quality and strengthen institutional sustainability.

Formal structures, such as advisory councils, shared technology governance, coordinated research activities, and legislative advocacy, will provide a foundation for transparency, alignment, and collaborative decision-making across institutions. A modernized approach to infrastructure and technology will further enhance efficiency with shared platforms, integrated data systems, and cross-institutional use of specialized facilities, enabling more thoughtful planning and investment. At the same time, coordinated administrative policies and services can help ensure all students and employees benefit from high-quality support, regardless of campus size or location.

Ultimately, these efforts are about building a more resilient, responsive, student-centered System. System-wide service models, consistent administrative policies, and scalable student support will help equip students across all campuses with access to resources, and faculty and staff will benefit from streamlined operations and professional development opportunities. Together, these strategies reinforce our System's ability to lead with purpose, prioritize fiscal discipline, and deliver transformational outcomes for the state of Louisiana.

OPTIMIZE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- Establish advisory councils composed of UL System finance and resource personnel, along with institutional representatives, to foster collaboration and alignment on long-term planning priorities

- Establish a System-wide IT governance framework to align technology strategies, reduce fragmentation, and guide enterprise-level decisions

- Develop a System-wide technology strategy to address the collective needs of all institutions, eliminating the need for duplicative institutional negotiations and enabling cost-effective procurement and planning

- Implement System-wide volume-based contracts for shared goods and services to reduce costs, improve quality, and enable bundled purchasing that generates savings across institutions

- Centralize key administrative services, such as payroll and procurement, at the System level to achieve operational efficiency and redirect savings toward high-impact institutional needs

- Collaborate with institutions to share specialized facilities and equipment, optimizing resource utilization and minimizing underutilized assets

- Streamline vendor relationships across coordinated contracting to maximize purchasing power and reduce duplicative efforts

- Develop a System-level role to advocate for state and federal funding in close collaboration with institutional leadership

- Hold regular leadership forums for university presidents and UL System leadership to hold shared strategies and consensus on legislative priorities, including capital needs and faculty and staff compensation

STANDARDIZE AND MODERNIZE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- Facilitate the sharing of student-service center best practices among institutions based on those that deliver consistent, high-quality support

- Leverage System-level coordination to expand access to essential student, faculty, and staff services, such as mental health support, to ensure continuity across institutions amid staffing changes

- Collaborate with institutions to develop and implement consistent System-level policies where appropriate, while supporting professional development for faculty and staff to strengthen institutional capacity and alignment

- Establish shared performance metrics and benchmarking tools to measure progress in cost savings, service delivery efficiency, and administrative alignment across the UL System

- Explore opportunities to streamline human resources and audit functions by providing these services at the System level

- Facilitate interdisciplinary mentorship opportunities at the System level for institutional faculty and staff

- Implement integrated data systems and platforms to improve efficiency, streamline data management and reporting, and enhance risk management across institutions

METRICS

- Total cost savings generated through volume-based contracts and centralized services

- Increase in state and federal funding secured through coordinated advocacy efforts

- Number of System/president strategy meetings held per year

- Total shared resources across institutions

- Reduction in redundant technology systems or licenses across institutions

- Participation rates among institutional staff in professional development programs supported by our System, such as online programming, events, and training

- Number of institutions utilizing student, faculty, and staff service best practices and frameworks

- Report the fiscal stability of our institutions quarterly

Student Access and Success

Leverage the UL System's collective voice to champion the value of higher education, expand student access, improve outcomes, and support talent retention across Louisiana.

Our System's institutions are dedicated to preparing students for careers that support their communities and meet growing industry demands. We pride ourselves on offering a coordinated, supportive academic experience that prepares students for successful careers and equips them with the skills needed to become confident, professional members of their communities. Through System-level coordination and shared resources, students have access to a wide range of opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Each institution within our System is shaped by its unique culture and community; however, together they share a unified commitment to providing students with meaningful opportunities to explore their academic interests in and out of the classroom. As a System, we are focused on supporting each institution as it expands its access and impact, strengthens the support structures that help students thrive, and aligns academic programs with Louisiana's economic future.

As Louisiana's largest higher education System, our role is to serve students through individual institutions and amplify our institutions' collective strengths, reduce duplication, and respond to state and regional needs through coordinated action. We are committed to reaching students in every corner of Louisiana and expanding awareness of the educational opportunities available through our System's institutions. Our mission extends beyond classroom instruction; we prepare students with the hard, soft, and applied skills needed to meet evolving industry needs and become responsible, community-driven individuals who lead healthier, more productive lives.

This priority area is organized across three focal points: expanding access to higher education, strengthening student supports and co-curricular experiences, and aligning academic programs with industry and innovation needs. Through these focuses, we reaffirm our dedication to enhancing the student experience and preparing the next generation of Louisiana's talent pipeline. By focusing on what our System can uniquely influence – shared infrastructure, policy alignment, external partnerships, and resource coordination – we will help our institutions thrive and ensure students across Louisiana are equipped for success.

EXPAND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

- Strengthen partnerships with K-12 schools to engage students early, support their postsecondary readiness, and provide robust onboarding experiences for a smooth transition into higher education

- Assess the feasibility of developing a common application platform that serves as a single-access point for all System institutions, streamlining the admissions process and expanding access to prospective students

- Coordinate System-wide outreach efforts to re-engage students who have paused or stopped their education, supporting pathways back to degree completion

- Create a centralized hub offering advising resources, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and onboarding assistance for transfer students across the UL System

- Explore and expand on System-wide articulation agreements with community colleges and across System institutions to improve transferability and degree completion

STRENGTHEN STUDENT SUPPORTS AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

- Support institutions in developing comprehensive, wraparound student support models that address academic, financial, and personal challenges

- Identify and promote scalable solutions that address non-academic barriers, such as transportation, housing, healthcare, childcare, and access to meals, through shared resources or partnerships

- Develop System-level partnerships with industry stakeholders to support experiential learning and career-aligned opportunities for students across institutions

- Create a System-wide framework to expand access to internships, research, and professional development opportunities across institutions

- Equip students with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed in both academic and digital environments, including System-curated resources on technology platforms and academic processes

ALIGN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS WITH INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION NEEDS

- Use labor market data to guide decision-making, ensuring programmatic investments support regional economic development and industry resilience

- Conduct regular assessments of institutional programs to identify underperforming offerings and provide System-level coordination and accountability for program reviews to ensure alignment with emerging fields, evolving skills, and industry needs

- Collaborate with external partners to ensure the curricula, institutional master plans, and facilities are responsive to evolving industry standards and skill demands to enhance graduate employability

- Build and maintain strategic relationships with state agencies to align educational initiatives with industry and economic development goals

- Collaborate with employers, industry groups, and community organizations to build clear, stackable pathways from education to employment

- Create opportunities for students to engage in cross-institutional, interdisciplinary coursework that enhances critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability

- Encourage collaboration among institutions to co-develop and share courses, programs, and resources that expand access and reduce duplication

- Identify high-performing or specialized programs across our System and explore online or cross-campus delivery models to increase access and efficiency

- Support faculty and academic leaders in developing and adopting innovative curricular approaches that integrate experiential learning, technology, and real-world application through System-supported conferences, seminars, and mentorship opportunities

METRICS

- Enrollment rates by institution, degree level, and program area

- Percent of students enrolled in cross-institutional courses

- System-wide definition of applied and experiential learning

- System-wide persistence and completion rates of incoming transfer students

- Four- and six-year degree completion rates of undergraduate students

- Degree completion rates of graduate students

- In-state graduate employment rates (6-12 months following degree completion)

- New or revised programs developed in response to labor market shifts

- Number of active partnerships with state agencies and talent development organizations

- Number of corporate partnerships coordinated at the System level

- Number of co-developed programs and shared resources implemented across institutions

- Percentage of institutions with access to coordinated mental health and essential student services provided through System-level support

- Total number of applicants to each institution

- Number of admitted applicants at each institution who do not proceed with enrollment

- Number of applicants at each institution who initiate but do not complete the application process

- Number of admitted applicants from each institution who do not enroll

- Number of students from all institutions who enroll but withdraw before the official census date

Research and Talent Development

Position the UL System as the state's leading source of applied, industry-aligned research and innovation while equipping students with the skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to thrive in rapidly evolving industries.

Expanding research capacity and accelerating talent development are central to our System's role as a driver of innovation and economic competition across the state. Our System is uniquely positioned to convene partners, align institutional strengths, and coordinate research and talent development efforts at scale.

By identifying strategic opportunities through regional and sector-specific analysis, our System can guide the development of applied research agendas, academic programs, and experiential learning pathways that prepare our undergraduate and graduate students with the skills necessary for long-term success in high-growth industries.

Strong, sustained partnerships with industry stakeholders are essential to advancing this vision. Through deeper collaboration, our System can foster an environment where employers are not only talent consumers, but co-investors in research, co-creators of workforce solutions, and essential partners in innovation. This approach strengthens the connection between education and employment, enhances the relevance of academic offerings, and positions our System as an indispensable contributor to the state's economic and research competitiveness.

Our System is also committed to building a statewide innovation ecosystem, supporting intellectual property development, accelerating commercialization, and investing in cross-institutional innovation hubs to enable ideas born in our institutions to scale and thrive. We empower faculty, staff, and students to transform ideas into impactful solutions by expanding access to facilities, resources, and technical assistance. Additionally, we aim to enhance undergraduate development by leveraging our resources to create stronger pathways that connect undergraduate education with graduate research, complementing the System's talent development goals and aligning with System initiatives like the academic summit to facilitate seamless transitions to advanced research opportunities.

By investing in this ecosystem, our System is not only expanding non-traditional revenue streams and research impact but also raising Louisiana's national profile as a leader in applied innovation, talent development, and economic transformation.

STRENGTHEN RESEARCH CAPACITY AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

- Conduct regional and sector-specific scans to identify and align research pursuits with industry needs and demands

- Encourage development of research agendas that are responsive to regional trends in Louisiana's target sectors, such as energy and process industries, logistics, aerospace and defense, agribusiness, professional services, life sciences, and technology

- Explore cross-institutional solutions to industry needs by establishing System-facilitated sector advisory councils composed of industry and academic leaders to co-design research priorities, applied learning opportunities, and talent development strategies

- Build robust employer partnerships that support the co-design of academic programs, experiential learning opportunities, and applied research experiences

- Explore best practices at institutions to develop early career faculty and support all institutions in applying these models to help these individuals grow and expand in their capacity for research

ALIGN FUNDING AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE GROWTH

- Guide institutions in identifying and growing areas of research specialization based on their unique strengths, assets, and regional opportunities

- Position the UL System office as a coordinating hub for research strategies, promoting resource sharing, System-wide collaboration, and large-scale infrastructure development

- Expand access to federal, philanthropic, and industry funding by identifying new opportunities and streamlining the pursuit process

- Coordinate support for multi-institutional grant proposals, submitted with a coalition mindset rather than as isolated initiatives

ACCELERATE INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND COMMERCIALIZATION

- Develop System-wide infrastructure, tools, and shared policies to support intellectual property (IP) creation, patenting, and commercialization across institutions

- Coordinate and promote partnerships with incubators, accelerators, and venture networks to help institutions build clear pathways from lab to market

- Support institutions in incentivizing entrepreneurship among students, faculty, and researchers through shared models, seed funding guidance, and recognition programs

- Facilitate training and mentorship opportunities across our System focused on startup development, innovation strategy, and commercialization

- Invest in innovation hubs within priority sectors that serve as cross-institution collaboration spaces and statewide platforms for commercialization, applied research, and talent development training

- Enable shared access to advanced equipment, labs, and facilities, particularly for smaller institutions and external partners, through System-level coordination

- Elevate the visibility of System-wide innovation through unified branding, national outreach, and strategic relationships with federal research agencies and national labs

METRICS

- Growth in research projects tied to Louisiana target sectors

- Number of interdisciplinary research initiatives launched in response to emerging trends

- Number of active System-facilitated industry-academic advisory councils

- Number of academic programs, research efforts, or workforce initiatives co-designed with talent partners

- Number of research initiatives or talent development programs by private and public partners

- Number of joint grant proposals submitted with UL System coordination

- Number of patents filed, intellectual property (IP) disclosures, and licenses issued across the UL System

- Number of institutions participating in System-supported innovation or entrepreneurship programs

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Leverage the UL System's statewide presence to advance strategic priorities through advocacy, policy engagement, public affairs, and stakeholder alignment — building trust, influence, and support among government leaders, industry partners, media, and communities.

The UL System's success depends on its ability to strategically engage with external stakeholders and advocate for public policies that strengthen higher education, talent development, and economic vitality in Louisiana. As a statewide leader in postsecondary education, the UL System must actively be part of public dialogue and drive policy outcomes that impact its institutions, students, and the broader communities it serves.

A unified and proactive external affairs strategy will enable the UL System to speak with a coordinated voice, cultivate strategic partnerships, and secure recognition and resources that reflect its statewide impact. By highlighting institutional outcomes — from graduate success to industry alignment and regional economic contributions — the UL System will demonstrate its value and earn the trust of public, private, and civic leaders.

Today's external affairs require a coordinated, agile approach integrating public affairs, policy advocacy, and strategic communications. The UL System will leverage consistent messaging, data-informed storytelling, and targeted engagement to inform public perception, build credibility, maintain public trust, and advance institutional goals.

Preparedness and transparency are essential to public trust. The UL System will invest in forward-looking external affairs infrastructure to ensure resilience during unexpected challenges, such as natural disasters, health crises, policy shifts, or reputational threats, and reinforce its role as a credible, responsive statewide leader.

Through intentional engagement and cross-sector alignment, the UL System will strengthen its voice, broaden its impact, and continue shaping the future of Louisiana's higher education.

METRICS

- Number of coordinated media placements and mentions per quarter

- Growth in policymaker and stakeholder engagement across UL System initiatives

- Participation rates in media and public affairs training programs

- Number of institutions aligned with UL System-wide public affairs and branding strategies

- Increase in external partnerships supporting UL System priorities

- Measurable growth in parent, family, and community engagement (e.g., event attendance, digital engagement, survey responses)

ADVANCE A COHESIVE UL SYSTEM BRAND AND PUBLIC PRESENCE

- Engage institutional leadership in developing a shared UL System brand that communicates relevance, accessibility, and statewide impact

- Promote the UL System as a driving force in Louisiana's economic and talent development strategy, emphasizing career adaptability, affordability, and a strong return on investment through industry-aligned academic programs

- Align public messaging across institutions through regular convenings of external affairs and communications leaders

- Elevate success stories demonstrating talent development, alumni outcomes, and contributions to regional economies

- Tailor outreach to families and prospective students to highlight the UL System's value proposition and alignment with industry needs

STRENGTHEN ADVOCACY, MEDIA RELATIONS, AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Launch data-driven media and public affairs campaigns that showcase the UL System's accomplishments and shared priorities

- Maintain a faculty and expert database to connect with media and policy influencers

- Build and sustain partnerships with local, regional, and state media to ensure ongoing visibility of the UL System's initiatives and leadership

- Disseminate timely updates to stakeholders via integrated platforms and technologies

- Increase collaboration with business, civic, and governmental organizations to promote shared objectives

ENHANCE CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND POLICY ALIGNMENT

- Encourage the development of institution-specific crisis communication protocols aligned with UL System-wide standards

- Provide regular UL System-led media and crisis response training for institutional leaders and public affairs personnel

- Share resources, templates, and professional development opportunities to strengthen public engagement and policy advocacy capacity

- Establish feedback channels for coordination between the UL System and campus leaders during policy shifts, public scrutiny, or crisis events

Implementation

Over the next five years, our System will follow a dynamic, adaptable roadmap shaped by a clear understanding of where we are and where we are heading, both as a state and as a System. This strategic plan is rooted in the values shared across our institutions and driven by a commitment to student success and institutional excellence. We realize each of our institutions and their impressive faculty and staff brings a unique culture, perspective, and range of learning experiences to bear for students, and this plan is intended to harness those strengths and provide both a path and support for continued growth and collective impact. We know five years can bring considerable change, especially in a fast-moving educational landscape. This reality is why this plan is designed to be both focused and flexible — able to adapt as student needs shift, industry demands evolve, and new challenges and opportunities emerge.

This is not simply a planning tool — it is a way to stay on track, prioritize efforts, and ensure progress is transparent and measurable — turning strategy into action.

This plan is the result of substantial collaboration and input from across our System and surrounding communities. It reflects the goals and enthusiasm of our students, faculty, staff, and partners. With clear priorities, defined outcomes, and a shared commitment to accountability, we are energized by the prospect of turning ideas into actions and results.

Implementation Timeline

The following serves as a guide for how our System will advance the priorities and strategic initiatives outlined within this strategic plan, organized by short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (3-5 years), long-term (5+ years), and ongoing timeframes. Some initiatives can be implemented quickly; others will need sustained effort through 2030. Many initiatives are interrelated, and actions meant to drive forward one strategy will support the achievement of others.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EXCELLENCE				
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	**SHORT-TERM**	**MEDIUM-TERM**	**LONG-TERM**	**ONGOING**
Establish advisory councils composed of UL System finance and resource personnel, along with institutional representatives, to foster collaboration and alignment on long-term planning priorities	●			
Establish a System-wide IT governance framework to align technology strategies, reduce fragmentation, and guide enterprise-level decisions	●			
Develop a System-wide technology strategy to address the collective needs of all institutions, eliminating the need for duplicative institutional negotiations and enabling cost-effective procurement and planning		●		
Implement System-wide volume-based contracts for shared goods and services to reduce costs, improve quality, and enable bundled purchasing that generates savings across institutions				●
Centralize key administrative services, such as payroll and procurement, at the System level to achieve operational efficiency and redirect savings toward high-impact institutional needs			●	
Collaborate with institutions to share specialized facilities and equipment, optimizing resource utilization and minimizing underutilized assets		●		
Streamline vendor relationships across coordinated contracting to maximize purchasing power and reduce duplicative efforts	●			
Develop a System-level role to advocate for state and federal funding in close collaboration with institutional leadership	●			
Hold regular leadership forums for university presidents and UL System leadership to develop shared strategies and consensus on legislative priorities, including capital needs and faculty and staff compensation	●			
Facilitate the sharing of student-service center best practices among institutions based on those that deliver consistent, high-quality support		●		
Leverage System-level coordination to expand access to essential student, faculty, and staff services, such as mental health support, to ensure continuity across institutions amid staffing changes		●		

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EXCELLENCE				
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	**SHORT-TERM**	**MEDIUM-TERM**	**LONG-TERM**	**ONGOING**
Collaborate with institutions to develop and implement consistent System-level policies where appropriate, while supporting professional development for faculty and staff to strengthen institutional capacity and alignment		●		
Establish shared performance metrics and benchmarking tools to measure progress in cost savings, service delivery efficiency, and administrative alignment across the UL System	●			
Explore opportunities to streamline human resources and audit functions by providing these services at the System level			●	
Facilitate interdisciplinary mentorship opportunities at the System level for institutional faculty and staff				●
Implement integrated data systems and platforms to improve efficiency, streamline data management and reporting, and enhance risk management across institutions		●		

PRIORITY AREA 2: STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS				
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	**SHORT-TERM**	**MEDIUM-TERM**	**LONG-TERM**	**ONGOING**
Strengthen partnerships with K-12 schools to engage students early, support their postsecondary readiness, and provide robust onboarding experiences for a smooth transition into higher education	●			
Assess the feasibility of developing a common application platform that serves as a single-access point for all System institutions, streamlining the admissions process and expanding access to prospective students			●	
Coordinate System-wide outreach efforts to re-engage students who have paused or stopped their education, supporting pathways back to degree completion		●		
Create a centralized hub offering advising resources, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and onboarding assistance for transfer students across the UL System	●			

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM	ONGOING
Explore and expand on System-wide articulation agreements with community colleges and across System institutions to improve transferability and degree completion		●		
Support institutions in developing comprehensive, wraparound student support models that address academic, financial, and personal challenges				●
Identify and promote scalable solutions that address non-academic barriers, such as transportation, housing, healthcare, childcare, and access to meals, through shared resources or partnerships			●	
Develop System-level partnerships with industry stakeholders to support experiential learning and career-aligned opportunities for students across institutions		●		
Create a System-wide framework to expand access to internships, research, and professional development opportunities across institutions		●		
Equip students with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed in both academic and digital environments, including System-curated resources on technology platforms and academic processes				●
Use labor market data to guide decision-making, ensuring programmatic investments support regional economic development and industry resilience				●
Conduct regular assessments of institutional programs to identify underperforming offerings and provide System-level coordination and accountability for program reviews to ensure alignment with emerging fields, evolving skills, and industry needs				●
Collaborate with external partners to ensure the curricula, institutional master plans, and facilities are responsive to evolving industry standards and skill demands to enhance graduate employability				●
Build and maintain strategic relationships with state agencies to align educational initiatives with industry and economic development goals				●
Collaborate with employers, industry groups, and community organizations to build clear, stackable pathways from education to employment	●			
Create opportunities for students to engage in cross-institutional, interdisciplinary coursework that enhances critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability		●		

PRIORITY AREA 2: STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM	ONGOING
Encourage collaboration among institutions to co-develop and share courses, programs, and resources that expand access and reduce duplication				●
Identify high-performing or specialized programs across our System and explore online or cross-campus delivery models to increase access and efficiency		●		
Support faculty and academic leaders in developing and adopting innovative curricular approaches that integrate experiential learning, technology, and real-world application through System-supported conferences, seminars, and mentorship opportunities		●		

PRIORITY AREA 3: RESEARCH AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM	ONGOING
Conduct regional and sector-specific scans to identify and align research pursuits with industry needs and demands				●
Encourage development of research agendas that are responsive to regional trends in Louisiana's target sectors, such as energy and process industries, logistics, aerospace and defense, agribusiness, professional services, life sciences, and technology		●		
Explore cross-institutional solutions to industry needs by establishing System-facilitated sector advisory councils composed of industry and academic leaders to co-design research priorities, applied learning opportunities, and talent development strategies		●		
Build robust employer partnerships that support the co-design of academic programs, experiential learning opportunities, and applied research experiences				●
Explore best practices at institutions to develop early career faculty and support all institutions in applying these models to help these individuals grow and expand in their capacity for research		●		

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM	ONGOING
Guide institutions in identifying and growing areas of research specialization based on their unique strengths, assets, and regional opportunities	●			
Position the UL System office as a coordinating hub for research strategies, promoting resource sharing, System-wide collaboration, and large-scale infrastructure development		●		
Expand access to federal, philanthropic, and industry funding by identifying new opportunities and streamlining the pursuit process		●		
Coordinate support for multi-institutional grant proposals, submitted with a coalition mindset rather than as isolated initiatives		●		
Develop System-wide infrastructure, tools, and shared policies to support intellectual property (IP) creation, patenting, and commercialization across institutions		●		
Coordinate and promote partnerships with incubators, accelerators, and venture networks to help institutions build clear pathways from lab to market			●	
Support institutions in incentivizing entrepreneurship among students, faculty, and researchers through shared models, seed funding guidance, and recognition programs	●			
Facilitate training and mentorship opportunities across our System focused on startup development, innovation strategy, and commercialization				●
Invest in innovation hubs within priority sectors that serve as cross-institution collaboration spaces and statewide platforms for commercialization, applied research, and talent development training			●	
Enable shared access to advanced equipment, labs, and facilities, particularly for smaller institutions and external partners, through System-level coordination			●	
Elevate the visibility of System-wide innovation through unified branding, national outreach, and strategic relationships with federal research agencies and national labs				●

PRIORITY AREA 4: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM	ONGOING
Engage institutional leadership in developing a shared UL System brand that communicates relevance, accessibility, and statewide impact	●			
Promote the UL System as a driving force in Louisiana's economic and talent development strategy, emphasizing career adaptability, affordability, and a strong return on investment through industry-aligned academic programs	●			
Align public messaging across institutions through regular convenings of external affairs and communications leaders	●			
Elevate success stories demonstrating talent development, alumni outcomes, and contributions to regional economies				●
Tailor outreach to families and prospective students to highlight the UL System's value proposition and alignment with industry needs		●		
Launch data-driven media and public affairs campaigns that showcase the UL System's accomplishments and shared priorities		●		
Maintain a faculty and expert database to connect with media and policy influencers			●	
Build and sustain partnerships with local, regional, and state media to ensure ongoing visibility of the UL System's initiatives and leadership		●		
Disseminate timely updates to stakeholders via integrated platforms and technologies		●		
Increase collaboration with business, civic, and governmental organizations to promote shared objectives				●
Encourage the development of institution-specific crisis communication protocols aligned with UL System-wide standards	●			
Provide regular UL System-led media and crisis response training for institutional leaders and public affairs personnel	●			
Share resources, templates, and professional development opportunities to strengthen public engagement and policy advocacy capacity		●		
Establish feedback channels for coordination between the UL System and campus leaders during policy shifts, public scrutiny, or crisis events		●		

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