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Agenda

Academic and Student Affairs

Wednesday, March 26, 2025
1:00 PM

Claiborne Building, 1st Floor ▪ Louisiana Purchase Room 1–100
1201 N. Third St. ▪ Baton Rouge, LA 70802

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. Routine Staff Approvals
 - B. Program Reconfiguration
- IV. Academic Programs
 - A. AAS Cybersecurity and Information Assurance – Nunez Community College
 - B. BS Disaster Management – University of Louisiana Monroe
 - C. BS Fire and Emergency Services Administration – Louisiana State University and A&M College
 - D. MS Cognitive Science – Louisiana Tech University
- V. Other Business
- VI. Adjournment

Committee Members: Terri P. Sterling, Chair; David Aubrey, Vice Chair; Christian C. Reed; Ted H. Glaser; Darren G. Mire; Samer Shamieh; LCTC System Representative; LSU System Representative; SU System Representative; UL System Representative
Staff: Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation

AGENDA ITEM III.A.

Routine Academic Requests & Staff Approvals

Institution	Request
LSU Alexandria	<p>Request to make multiple adjustments to the organizational structure of academic units at the institution. These changes will include college and department changes and the movement of degree programs where applicable. The following changes will have no significant fiscal impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change the College of Natural Science and Mathematics to the College of Science, Technology, and Mathematics• Change the Department of English and Humanities to the Department of English, History, and Humanities• Change the Department of Communication, Languages, and Arts to the Department of Communication and Arts• Eliminate the Department of History, Political Science, and Disaster Science and change the name of the Department of Criminal Justice to the Department of Criminal Justice and Civic Sciences <p>Approved.</p>
LSU A&M	<p>Request to establish a Post-baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) in Civil Engineering (CIP 14.0801). Approved.</p>
McNeese	<p>Request to establish a Post-baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) in Early Childhood Education Grades PK-3 (CIP 13.1210). Approved.</p>
Southeastern	<p>Request to change the name of the BS in Health Systems Management to Health Systems Administration to better align with the programs' content and to make the program more recognizable to prospective students. Approved.</p>
UL Lafayette	<p>Request to offer the BA in Sociology (CIP 45.1101) 100% online. Approved.</p>

AGENDA ITEM III.B.

Proposed Academic Program Reconfiguration Convert the PhD Marriage & Family Therapy into the PhD in Marriage & Family Therapy and PhD in Family Systems University of Louisiana at Monroe

Background Information

The University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) has requested Board of Regents' approval to reconfigure the existing PhD in Marriage & Family Therapy (MFT) into the PhD in Marriage & Family Therapy (CIP 51.1505) and the PhD in Family Systems (CIP 19.0704). Systemic Studies is currently a successful concentration within the MFT PhD. The University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors approved ULM's proposal to split the PhD in MFT into the PhD in MFT and the PhD in Family Systems and submitted the request to Regents for consideration. Implementing the reconfiguration requires no programmatic changes or additional resources.

Staff Summary

Both MFT and Systemic Studies are grounded in system theory, a way of thinking that helps counselors understand how people's actions and relationships affect each other and the world around them. However, the two programs are distinct in terms of domains of application. The principal distinction between the two is that graduates with a PhD in MFT often pursue careers as clinical therapists specializing in couples and family therapy, while those with a PhD in Family Systems might work in research roles, academia, policy development, or community programs focusing on family issues. The current Family Systems concentration is solely theoretical and, unlike the PhD in MFT, has no clinical component. Converting the concentration to a standalone PhD in Family Systems will clearly differentiate one graduate from the other and remove confusion for employers regarding whether a graduate is clinically trained. The proposed reconfiguration of the program will require no additional courses, faculty, facilities, or other resources. The systemic studies concentration produced 66% of the PhD program's graduates in the past six years (28 of 42) and currently 61% of the total enrollment of students in the MFT PhD for spring 2025 are in that concentration (27 of 44). Both programs will continue to operate in the School of Allied Health within the ULM College of Health Sciences and will require no change in administrative structure or staffing.

Staff Analysis

The proposed separation of the two distinct programs is necessary to accurately reflect the difference between the related fields and to provide a more accurate degree title for recruitment and for graduates in the job market. The reconfiguration requires no change in curriculum, faculty, or administration and will require no additional resources. MFT and Family Systems are distinct fields and each program at ULM currently has enough graduates to thrive separately.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the proposed reconfiguration of the PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy into the PhD in Marriage & Family Therapy (CIP 51.1505) and the PhD in Family Systems (CIP 19.0704) at the University of Louisiana at Monroe with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.A.

Proposed Associate of Applied Science in Cybersecurity & Information Assurance Nunez Community College

Background Information

Nunez Community College (Nunez) requests Board of Regents' approval to offer an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance. The proposal was approved by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) Board of Supervisors and then submitted to Regents for consideration. The proposal was then favorably reviewed by Chief Academic Officers statewide and was included in the institution's 2024–2025 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

The proposed AAS in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance will prepare workforce-ready professionals for roles in IT security, network defense, and risk management. The program will focus on protecting systems, networks, and data from cyber threats while ensuring compliance with industry standards. The curriculum contains additional stackable credentials that students will obtain while completing the associate degree: a Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS) in Information Systems Security Professional and Career and Technical Certificate (CTC) in Network Security. Students will also earn several CompTIA industry-based certifications that are embedded in the core courses in the curriculum. Nunez will also be seeking membership in the Louisiana Cyber Academy Consortium. Support from the Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund will be used to launch the proposed program. The Louisiana Legislature established this special fund within the state treasury in 2020 for the purpose of funding degree and certificate programs in cybersecurity fields.

1. Value:

- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** The demand for cybersecurity professionals is increasing both locally and nationally. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs in information security were expected to grow by 37% from 2012 to 2022, a rate much faster than the average for other occupations. The information in the chart below is specific to parishes located in Louisiana Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA) 1, where Nunez is located. This includes St. Bernard and surrounding parishes.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Computer Network Support Specialist	5-star	214	235	10%	\$63,595
Information Security Analyst	5-star	181	228	26%	\$110, 635
Computer Systems Analyst	5-star	711	764	7%	\$87,509

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** The program's curriculum was developed with input from industry stakeholders confirming its alignment with industry needs. The Nunez Cybersecurity Advisory Board will ensure that the program's curriculum remains relevant and current in the continuously evolving landscape of information technology. Employers including the Port of New Orleans, the St. Bernard Port, and GNO, Inc. have pledged their support of the proposed AAS program.
- c. **Same or Similar In-State Programs:** Currently, no college in the Nunez service area, nor in the New

Orleans metropolitan area, offers an associate-level degree in Cybersecurity. Delgado Community College and Northshore Technical Community College both offer certificates in related areas. Nunez plans to establish a transfer agreement with Southern University at New Orleans, which offers a Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity.

- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** The program will be promoted to students through recruitment efforts at high schools, through the institution's Dual Enrollment program, and at on-campus events for local high school students and transfer students. Additionally, several students currently enrolled in Nunez's existing Certificates of Technical Studies (CTS) in Information Systems Security Professional and in Network Security have expressed interest in a degree that increases employment options or provides an opportunity to transition to a four-year institution.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	18	36	46	57
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	13	18	25

2. **Resources:** Implementing this program will not result in any immediate increase in indirect costs. Existing faculty will support startup of the program. A portion of the scholarship funding secured via the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund is dedicated to supporting students from underrepresented groups and special populations, particularly minorities.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty will be sufficient to support the program.	No new faculty needed.	\$0
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	No additional facilities needed.	\$0
Student Support	Existing resources will support the needs of the program.	No additional resources projected.	\$0

3. **Master Plan Priorities:** The following aspects of the proposal directly address priorities or goals of the statewide attainment goal and 2030 Master Plan.

- **Accessibility:** Courses will be offered in-person, online, and in a hybrid format. Depending on student demand, night and weekend classes can also be made available to accommodate working students.
- **Affordability:** The program will use Open Educational Resources (OERs) when available. Additionally, the college bookstore participates in the Follett Access program to reduce the cost of textbooks and course supplies. Students can submit documentation of previous work or prior learning experiences, including credit-by-exam, IBC, military service credit, and professional portfolio review.
- **Partnerships:** Nunez plans to seek recognition as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-C). One criterion to successfully achieve the NCAE-C designation is to establish partnerships with industry and academic institutions. Nunez plans to expand and strengthen already established partnerships through their advisory board membership. Nunez also plans to join the Louisiana Cyber Academy Consortium.
- **Work-based Learning:** Nunez has established training and collaboration partnerships with industries in the service area, including Associated Terminals, Venture Global LNG, and the Port of New Orleans, that will provide workforce training and internship opportunities.

- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** Using grant support from the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund, Nunez will provide scholarship funding for 15 economically disadvantaged students at \$1,000 per semester for four semesters.

Staff Analysis

Nunez Community College's proposed AAS in Information Assurance and Cybersecurity will support Louisiana's efforts to grow and sustain a robust cyber workforce. The program will prepare graduates to function as entry-level network security specialists while providing opportunities to obtain valuable Industry-Based Certifications (IBCs) along the way. The support from the Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund and the Louisiana Cyber Academy will assist the institution in meeting educational needs and workforce demand, ensuring a steady supply of skilled cybersecurity professionals for the state.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Associate of Applied Science in Information Assurance & Cybersecurity (CIP 11.1001) at Nunez Community College, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.B.

Proposed Bachelor of Science in Disaster Management University of Louisiana Monroe

Background Information

University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM) requests Board of Regents approval to offer a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Disaster Management. The proposal was approved by the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System (ULS) then submitted to Regents for consideration. The program was reviewed by Chief Academic Officers statewide and was included in the institution's 2024–2025 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

The proposed BS in Disaster Management will be a specialized undergraduate program designed to address the need for trained professionals in disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery. The program combines scientific knowledge, practical skills, and interdisciplinary approaches to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience necessary to effectively manage disasters and enhance community resilience. Embedded within the curriculum are National Incident Management System (NIMS) and FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certifications to ensure graduates receive industry-relevant training.

1. **Value:** Per Regent's policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.
- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** With the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters and emergencies, the demand for professionals skilled in planning and response has grown. Greater attention to disaster and emergency management in recent years has also led to increased investment in the field. The data in the chart below reflects information at the statewide level.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Compliance Officer	4-star	3,978	4,180	5%	\$67,516
Emergency Management Director	4-star	134	139	4%	\$94,390
Occupational Health and Safety Specialist	4-star	1,843	2,123	15%	\$84,864

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** The proposed BS in Disaster Management was developed in response to demand from alumni, community members, and local representatives. The interdisciplinary curriculum integrates disaster management with fields such as criminal justice, geoscience, and risk management. An advisory committee, established in Spring of 2023, comprised of a diverse group of faculty and industry representatives, helped develop the curriculum, ensuring it addresses workforce needs and positions students for roles in disaster readiness, response, and recovery.
- c. **Same or Similar In-State Programs:** Although Louisiana State University A&M is proposing a new BS in Fire and Emergency Management Administration, the proposed program would be the first bachelor's level degree program in the state specializing in disaster management. Currently, Northwestern State University offers a MS in Homeland Security, the University of New Orleans offers a Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management and Community Resilience, and Delgado Community College was recently approved to offer an Associate of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** ULM's new partnership with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) in Vicksburg, Mississippi has created interest in the program from students, faculty, and the Army Corp of Engineers.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	10	19	30	42
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	0	3

2. **Resources:** One new faculty member will be required to teach the new core courses and serve as program coordinator. As enrollment grows, adjunct faculty will be hired if necessary. The faculty line associated with the hire of a new faculty member is being funded through a reallocated faculty line. A decline in enrollment in accounting allows the reallocation of this line without negative impact to the accounting program. The proposed program's indirect costs will be absorbed by the university's existing budget, with no significant strain on services like career resources or library support.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty will support the proposed program.	One new faculty member will be hired to serve as program coordinator.	Yr. 1+: \$100,000
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	Minimal costs will be incurred for equipment, travel, and software needs.	Yr. 1+: \$4000
Student Support	Existing student support resources will support the program.	No additional resources are needed.	\$0

3. **Master Plan Priorities:** The following aspects of the proposal directly address priorities or goals of the statewide attainment goal and 2030 Master Plan.

- **Accessibility:** Courses in the proposed program will be offered during the day and evenings, to provide flexible scheduling options for students who work.
- **Affordability:** Students can earn credit through CLEP exams, faculty-developed exams, and prior learning evaluations, with flexibility for applying previous college credit. The proposed program will use Open Educational Resources (OER), when available, and ULM's Warhawk Bundle program to significantly reduce textbook costs. Warhawk Bundle is a course materials fulfillment program that lowers the cost of course materials and ensures that undergraduate students have their required course materials on the first day of class.
- **Partnerships:** The proposed program will partner with state and local governments, the Red Cross, United Way, National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), Louisiana Emergency Management Association (LEPA), and FEMA. These collaborations will provide students with practical case materials and real-world experience in disaster management.
- **Work-based Learning:** Faculty in the proposed program have engaged with several local agencies to promote the program and encourage work-based learning opportunities. Examples include FEMA (Region 6), Biomedical Research Innovation Park in Monroe, and the ERDC in Vicksburg, Mississippi.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** The proposed degree program will focus on increasing access to a growing field for a

diverse student population. The program will provide advising and tutoring services to address individual learning challenges and ensure students are aware of financial aid and scholarship opportunities.

Staff Analysis

The proposed BS in Disaster Management is designed to address the increasing demand for professionals trained to manage natural and human-made disasters. This program will prepare students to mitigate, respond to, and aid in the recovery from emergencies through coursework focused on contingency planning, hazard assessment, emergency operations, and recovery strategies. Embedded within the curriculum are NIMS and FEMA certifications to ensure graduates receive industry-relevant training. The proposed degree program is a timely and necessary program that will contribute to building a more prepared and resilient workforce.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Disaster Management (CIP 43.0302) at University of Louisiana at Monroe, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.C.

Proposed Bachelor of Science in Fire and Emergency Services Administration Louisiana State University and A&M College

Background Information

Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU) requests Board of Regents approval to offer a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Fire and Emergency Management Administration. The proposal was approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors then submitted to Regents for consideration. Because the proposed program was not included in year one of the 2024–2025 Academic Plan, the institution was required to submit an off-cycle review request including justification for the program’s urgency and readiness for implementation. Staff approved the request and Chief Academic Officers statewide reviewed the program.

Staff Summary

Fire science plays a critical role in understanding fire dynamics, assessing fire risks, and developing strategies to prevent, suppress, and manage fires effectively, thereby protecting lives, property, and the environment. The proposed degree aims to prepare graduates to be qualified administrators in leadership positions in fire and emergency management organizations. The program’s focus is primarily on both structural fire and emergency management scenarios, including preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery strategies. The interdisciplinary degree will incorporate LSU’s minor in construction management and the disaster science and management minor offered by the Department of Geography and Anthropology and will integrate scientific principles with emergency management practices to ensure graduates have a foundation of knowledge that integrates theoretical concepts with real-world applications. Graduates can pursue various career opportunities in both the public and private sectors, including roles in emergency management agencies, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, healthcare organizations, nonprofit organizations, and private companies that provide emergency services and consulting. The program has been designed to primarily serve students who enter the program with a completed associate degree in a related field, starting with a 2+2 partnership with LSU Eunice’s AAS in Fire and Emergency Services.

1. **Value:** Per Regent’s policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.
- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** LSU’s Department of Construction Management hosted an Industry Insights Panel (IIP) where the department invited input from employers and community leaders about this program. Attendees included leadership from multiple Louisiana fire departments, FEMA, and a disaster consulting company. The department also has a well-established industry advisory board called the Construction Industry Advisor Council (CIAC). The CIAC is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with diverse industry membership. Both groups expressed a need for the program, both as an entry point to the industry and as a pathway for professionals to advance into leadership roles.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers	3	1915	1900	-.8%	\$54,600
Emergency Management Directors	4	134	139	3.6%	\$81,120
Compliance Officers	4	3,978	4,180	5.1%	\$62,046

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs: Information gathering and collaboration with the IIP and CIAC (described above) were integral in the program's development, including verification of need and content of the curriculum.
- c. Same or Similar In-State Programs: Though the University of Louisiana Monroe is proposing a new BS in Disaster Management, the proposed program would be the first bachelor's level degree program in the state specializing in fire emergency management. LSU Eunice offers the AAS in Fire and Emergency Services, which will be the initial focus partnership feeder program. Delgado Community College (Delgado) and Bossier Parish Community College both also offer fire science associate degrees, and Delgado Community College was recently approved to offer an Associate of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Management. All these programs are potential feeder programs to the proposed online degree. The University of New Orleans offers a Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management and Community Resilience and the related Master of Urban and Regional Planning.
- d. Student Enrollment and Completion: The proposed program will be offered 100% online giving the program national appeal. Based on market analysis and growing demand in the field for trained leaders in fire and emergency management, LSU estimates significant and rapid growth in program enrollment.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	30	77	147	252
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	15	35

2. **Resources**: The proposed program will be a strategic collection primarily of existing courses in construction management, emergency management, and disaster science taught by existing faculty in those areas for at least the first three years. Two new courses will be developed and taught by existing faculty. One program support staff member will be hired in year two to support the program and its students. The online program will use existing infrastructure to operate.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty will support the proposed program.	One new faculty member may be hired in year 4 as enrollment demands.	Yr. 4+: \$135,450
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	No new physical resources are needed.	\$0
Student Support	Existing student support resources will support the program.	One additional staff member will be hired.	Yr. 2+: \$71,000

3. **Master Plan Priorities**: The following aspects of the proposal directly address priorities or goals of the statewide attainment goal and 2030 Master Plan.

- **Accessibility**: The proposed program will be delivered on campus and 100% online allowing students to work, intern, or co-op during the daytime hours. It will also be offered on campus with some courses offered in a hybrid format allowing students more flexibility with work hours.
- **Affordability**: Prior Learning Assessments will be used when appropriate, especially those that have professional certifications or military credit. In addition to LSUE, the goal is to work with other 2-year schools to enable those students to transfer seamlessly into the bachelor's programs.
- **Partnerships**: A new sub-committee under the CIAC Curriculum and Accreditation Committee will

be formed with experts in fire and emergency management administration. The group will support the department, its degree programs, and the students.

- **Work-based Learning**: As with other programs housed with the department, students will be strongly encouraged to find an industry internship. Due to the strong relationship with industry, almost 85% of students in the department experience at least one paid internship prior to graduation. In some instances, the employer has funded the student's education while under their employment.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations**: Flexible online course delivery would especially support adult students (age 25+) who seek additional education. The CIAC has a vibrant student mentorship program that helps close the achievement gap with underserved populations. In addition, because of the construction management minor, there are several industry-funded scholarships available to students.

Staff Analysis

The proposed BS in Fire and Emergency Management Administration was developed in direct collaboration with industry through LSU's robust partnerships and advisory board structures. The 2+2 curriculum structure will provide opportunities for students as they build their careers toward administration and leadership roles, and the fully online format will provide flexibility and accessibility for working professionals. The program will complement efforts at other institutions throughout the state to build Louisiana's capacity in the various areas of fire, disaster, and emergency management.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Fire and Emergency Management Administration (CIP 43.0302) at Louisiana State University and A&M College, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.D.

Proposed Master of Science in Cognitive Science Louisiana Tech University

Background Information

Louisiana Tech University (LA Tech) requests Board of Regents' approval to offer a Master of Science (MS) in Cognitive Science. The proposal was approved by the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors (ULS) and submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration. The proposal was reviewed by external consultant Dr. Arturo Hernandez, Professor of Psychology at the University of Houston, who was extremely supportive of the proposed program. The program was favorably reviewed by Chief Academic Officers statewide and was included in the institution's 2024–2025 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

Cognitive Science is an interdisciplinary field that examines daily human behaviors and the cognitive and neural processes that underlie them. The proposed 39-credit hour graduate program will equip students with important skills such as research design, statistics analyses, and programming, in addition to understanding core cognitive concepts. These skills lay a strong foundation upon which students can either further their education by pursuing a Ph.D. in a related field (e.g., Cognitive Psychology, Computational Psychology, Engineering Psychology, Human Factors, Behavioral Neuroscience, Social Neuroscience, Linguistics, Learning Sciences, Anthropology) or work in the human factors industry, specifically in the fields of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), User Experience (Design and Research) (UX), User Interface (UI), and Ergonomics. Currently there are no master's level programs in Louisiana that allow one to specialize in the field of Cognitive Science. For students interested in working in the fields of HCI, UX, etc., the proposed program will equip them with the fundamentals of human cognitive processing and how to study it. In addition, for students seeking to enter industry upon graduation, the proposed program has a specific track wherein these students complete a practicum, gaining experiential training within a company, government agency, or other organizations.

1. **Value:** Per Regent's policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.
 - a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** The demand for professionals with expertise in cognition, machine learning, and neuroinformatics is rapidly growing. This program will fill a critical gap by providing advanced training that bridges the sciences and humanities, preparing graduates for careers in research, technology, healthcare, and more.

Related Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2033 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ¹
Software Developer	5-star	3,719	5,942	60%	\$128,900
Statistician	3-star	124	168	35%	\$75,899
Training & Development Specialist	4-star	2,141	2,672	25%	\$66,227

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs: The program’s interdisciplinary curriculum provides the skills necessary to excel at several different types of careers. Cognitively focused careers are expected to increase with the advancement of machine learning, human centered user experience, and software development.
- c. Same or Similar In-State Programs: This will be the first masters-level program in cognitive science in the state. LSU A&M offers a Ph.D. program in Cognitive and Brain Sciences, for which this program could serve as a feeder for students wishing to pursue doctoral-level education.
- d. Student Enrollment and Completion: Student interest was determined through interviews with current undergraduate students who indicated a desire to pursue graduate education. During these advising conversations, several students expressed interest in a deeper understanding of how the brain supports daily behavior, a concept that aligns directly with the proposed degree program. The program will attract students from across the state due to the lack of a current graduate program in cognitive science.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	12	22	22	22
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	10	10	10

2. **Resources:** The MS in Cognitive Science will require one new full-time faculty member to support teaching and thesis support. Existing departmental facilities and technology will support the new degree.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty in the department will support the program.	One new full-time faculty member will be hired for the specialty Cognitive Science courses.	Yr 1+: \$80,000
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing offices and classrooms are sufficient to support the program.	No additional resources needed.	\$0
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	No additional resources needed.	\$0

3. **Master Plan Priorities:** The following aspects of the proposal directly address priorities or goals of the statewide attainment goal and 2030 Master Plan.
 - Accessibility: The proposed program is designed to be accessible to working students, with a majority of the curriculum offered online. The research component of the curriculum will be conducted in person due to the nature of cognitive research. However, the proposed program has built-in flexibility to accommodate students’ schedules in the form of personalized mentor-mentee research training.
 - Affordability: The program uses Open Educational Resources (OER) digital materials that can replace costly textbooks and other course materials. Additionally, credits can be transferred from comparable courses and institutions.
 - Partnerships: The proposed program has a specific “industry track” allowing students to complete a practicum, which will enable them to gain experiential training within a company, government

agency, or other organization of their choice.

- **Work-based Learning**: The proposed program integrates professional development components, such as virtual workshops, simulations, and virtual labs, into the curriculum and includes remote internships, incorporating experiential learning modules, and establishing mentorship opportunities.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations**: The proposed program offers many core courses in online format and/or in-person in the evenings. This targeted support contributes to the success of working individuals and adult learners.

Staff Analysis

The proposed MS in Cognitive Science will provide a degree program that prepares students for various roles in research and technology. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, this program will contribute to advancements in cognitive science and its applications. External reviewer Dr. Arturo Hernandez described the program as “very well poised to have a great impact” stating that it will “create something that is unique to the State of Louisiana.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Master of Science in Cognitive Science (CIP 42.0101) at Louisiana Tech University with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution’s 2025–2026 Academic Plan.