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Agenda

Academic and Student Affairs

Wednesday, June 18, 2025
11:10 AM

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
 - C. 2025 ACT Policy Statement
 - D. Louisiana Extension Academies
- IV. Academic Programs
 - A. AAS Diesel Equipment Technician – Delgado Community College
 - B. BS Applied Data Science – Louisiana State University and A&M College
 - C. BS Disaster Preparedness and Response – Louisiana State University of Alexandria
 - D. MS Medical Laboratory Science – Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans
 - E. BA Social Work – Nicholls State University
 - F. BA Recording Arts – University of Louisiana at Lafayette
 - G. PhD Applied Computing and Information Sciences – University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- V. New Aquatic Germplasm and Genetic Resources Research Center of Excellence – Louisiana State University A&M and Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
- VI. Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund Update
- VII. Other Business

VIII. Adjournment

Committee Members: Terri P. Sterling, Chair; David J. Aubrey, Vice Chair; Christian C. Creed; Ted H. Glaser III; Darren G. Mire; Samer Shamieh; Devesh Sarda (Student Member); 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 HSC Shreveport	Request to change the name of the School of Allied Health Professions to the School of Health Professions and Sciences. Approved.
McNeese	Request to merge the College of Science, Engineering, and Mathematics and the College of Agricultural Sciences into the College of Engineering and Sciences. Approved.
McNeese	Request to offer the BS in Medical Laboratory Sciences (CIP 51.1005) 100% online. Approved.
Nicholls	Request to change the name of the BS Human Performance Education to the BS Human Performance Education and Kinesiology. Approved.
UL Lafayette	Request to make the following changes to better reflect program content: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MS in Systems Technology (CIP 15.1701) to MS Engineering and Technology Management (CIP 15.1501)• Department of Engineering Technology to Department of Engineering and Technology Management Approved.
Delgado	Request to change the name of the AAS Computer Network Technology (CIP 11.0901) to Computer Networking and Cybersecurity to more accurately reflect the content of the program and align with commonly used terminology. Approved.
SOWELA	Request to change the name of the AAS in Accounting Technology (CIP 52.0302) to Accounting to more accurately reflect the program's content and transferability. Approved.
SOWELA	Request to offer the AAS in Criminal Justice (CIP 43.0104) 100% online. Approved.

AGENDA ITEM III.B.

Proposed Academic Program Reconfiguration Convert the MA in Psychology into the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis McNeese State University

Background Information

McNeese State University (MSU) has requested Board of Regents' approval to reconfigure the existing MA in Psychology into the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis (CIP 42.2814). Applied Behavior Analysis is currently a successful concentration within the MA in Psychology. The University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors approved McNeese's proposal to convert the MA in Psychology to a MS in Applied Behavior Analysis and submitted the request to Regents for consideration. Implementing the conversion requires no changes to curriculum, course offerings, or faculty and no additional resources.

Staff Summary

MSU currently offers two concentrations under its MA in Psychology: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and General/Experimental. The ABA concentration is the more substantive of the two and is accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). Following an ABAI site visit last summer, the Department of Psychology and Counseling indicated in its follow-up report that it would seek approval to transition the concentration into a standalone degree program.

Enrollment in the ABA concentration for the last three years has been as follows: Fall 22: 19, Fall 23: 12, and Fall 24: 16. The three-year completer average for the ABA concentration is 10.3, well above the low completer viability threshold for a master's program. In Spring 2025, there were 17 students enrolled in the MA in Psychology. Of those, 13 were in the ABA concentration. Students currently in the program will have the option to either complete their studies within the existing MA in Psychology or transition to the MS in ABA. Students opting for the teach-out option would complete the program by Spring 2027, with no additional fees or expenses incurred as a result of the transition.

The University currently offers all courses required for the intended degree, taught by existing full-time and part-time faculty. The department already has the necessary curriculum, faculty, staff, equipment, software, facilities, and student interest to administer the proposed MS in ABA without requiring additional funding. All necessary resources are in place to separate the ABA concentration from the MA in Psychology without modifying curriculum, course offerings, faculty, or support.

Staff Analysis

The proposed reconfiguration of the MA in Psychology to a MS in Applied Behavior Analysis requires no change in curriculum, faculty, or administration and will require no additional resources. MSU is realigning its graduate program offerings to increase enrollment and retention through the establishment of the MS in ABA, which is currently a successful concentration under the MA Psychology program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the proposed reconfiguration of the MA in Psychology into the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis (CIP 42.2814) at McNeese State University, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025-2026 Academic Plan.

LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS
Enhanced ACT EMR (2025)
Policy Statement

Background

The Board of Regents establishes minimum admission and placement standards for dual enrollment, early college, first-year, and transfer students at Louisiana public colleges and universities. Two-year institutions are open admission and, therefore, establish no academic requirements for entry. Four-year institutions may adopt additional, more specific, or more rigorous requirements for admission.

The minimum standardized test requirements applicable to many financial aid programs administered by LOSFA are set by legislative statute.

Scores on standardized tests such as the ACT or SAT combined with a student's GPA in the high school core course curriculum comprise eligibility standards for admission and placement in several Board of Regents and LOSFA policies.

Effective 2025

ACT has announced that, beginning in April 2025, the test's Science section will become optional and students may choose to take the ACT national test with or without it. The ACT will consist of the required English, Math, and Reading (EMR) sections.

ACT has released the following schedule of effective dates for the new Enhanced ACT:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| ▪ April 2025 | ACT National Online Only | Science choice begins |
| ▪ September 2025 | ACT National Paper Tests | Updated composite score for all ACT Tests |
| ▪ Spring 2026 | State & District | Spring Testing in the new format |

The new ACT Composite score will be calculated using the English, Math, and Reading scores.

ACT has announced that the following **will not** change:

- The test's scale will remain 1–36 with no changes to ACT benchmarks or state-specific achievement standards.
- Scores on tests taken **prior to** the rollout of the new Composite score **will not** change.
- Both paper-and-pencil and online tests will continue to be available.

Board of Regents Response Effective April 2025

Current statutory provisions cover the use of the new Enhanced ACT EMR for financial aid programs governed by LOSFA. The BOR will recognize the Enhanced ACT EMR Composite Score for placement and admission to the state's public postsecondary institutions. Scores on ACT tests taken prior to April 2025 will also be honored.

AGENDA ITEM III. D.

Louisiana Extension Academy Programs

Background Information

Under the authority of R.S. 17:151.1, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the Board of Regents (BOR) released a request for applications for Louisiana Extension Academy programs beginning in September 2019. This legislation was adopted in response to the need for greater connection among high schools, colleges, and employers.

Extension Academy programs are designed to support students on track to graduate but not on track to participate in a high-value postsecondary college or training program that leads to an associate's degree, a registered pre-apprenticeship, or an advanced Industry-Based Credential (IBC).

Staff Summary

Extension academies specifically support students on track for high school graduation but not on track to participate in a high-value postsecondary college or training program: for example: 1) students graduating on a TOPS University diploma pathway who are not eligible for TOPS or 2) students graduating on a Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma who are not on track to earn an advanced credential and who are not eligible for TOPS Tech. Schools implementing these programs are authorized by BESE and the Board of Regents for three years.

Currently, two Extension Academy programs exist, one in Caddo Parish (up for renewal) and one in Orleans Parish (approved 2024–2027). An additional program, the Helix Mentorship STEAM Academy in Baton Rouge is proposed for approval.

Staff Analysis

The Louisiana Extension Academy programs accomplish the following:

- Provide a debt-free, accelerated, dual-enrollment college experience;
- Increase employment readiness through employer-driven work-based learning experiences;
- Ensure significant work toward Regents-recognized degrees or participation in registered apprenticeships; and
- Facilitate student success through postsecondary transitional coaching.

The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved the following extension academy school sites for the 2025–2026 through 2027–2028 school years at their June meeting.

School Site	Application Type
a. Caddo Parish Extension Academy	Renewal
b. Helix Community Schools Extension Academy	New

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the Extension Academy school sites for the 2025–2026 through 2027–2028 school years, as outlined.



Office of the Superintendent

LaMont Cole

May 21, 2025

Subject: Approval of Extension Academy

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to officially approve the establishment and implementation of the Extension Academy for Helix Mentorship STEAM Academy, effective August 2025. This strategy aligns with our district's strategic goals to expand academic opportunities, provide flexible pathways for student success, and support students through the post-secondary transition.

The Extension Academy is designed to offer students who are on track to graduate, but do not currently qualify for low-cost, high-value, post-secondary credentials, to participate in a low-cost, post-secondary college or training program to attain a Regents-recognized associate degree, a registered pre-apprenticeship, or an advanced Industry Based Credential.

I believe that this academy will offer significant benefits to our scholars, including:

- Providing a debt-free, accelerated, dual enrollment college experience
- Preparing students for work, through employer driven work-based learning experiences, internships, or apprenticeships
- Ensuring the attainment of Regents-recognized associate degrees, registered apprenticeships, or an advanced Industry Based Credential; and
- Facilitating student success after graduation through post-secondary transitional coaching.

I recognize the importance of adapting to the evolving needs of our students and community and providing innovative programs that respond to those needs. The Extension Academy represents a significant step in that direction, and I commend the Helix team and staff who have contributed to its development.

Sincerely,

LaMont Cole, Superintendent
East Baton Rouge Parish School System





Office of the Superintendent

LaMont Cole

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- Preparing students for work, through employer driven work-based learning experiences, internships, or apprenticeships
- Ensuring the attainment of Regents-recognized associate degrees, registered apprenticeships, or an advanced Industry Based Credential; and
- Facilitating student success after graduation through post-secondary transitional coaching.

I recognize the importance of adapting to the evolving needs of our students and community and providing innovative programs that respond to those needs. The Extension Academy represents a significant step in that direction, and I commend the Helix team and staff who have contributed to its development.

Sincerely,

Shashonnie Steward, President
East Baton Rouge Parish School Board





CADDO PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

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Theodis Lamar Goree, Ph.D.
Superintendent

March 31, 2023

Stephanie Hernandez Marcum
Executive Director of Postsecondary Readiness
Office of Career and College Readiness
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Mrs. Marcum,

Caddo Parish School Board is requesting the continuation of the Caddo Extension Academy Program (CEAP). Since the inception of the Caddo Extension Academy in the 2020-21 school year, graduating students have benefited with the post-secondary opportunities that would not have been possible without the approved grant from the Louisiana Department of Education. Although our enrollment has been low each year, the committed students have made significant progress with earning industry-based credentials and dual enrollment credit hours. Noting a few accomplishments, Caddo had 1 student in the first year complete the program in Nursing Assistance from Ayers Business College and a current student in his second year at Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College scheduled to complete his program in Diesel Powered Equipment Technology in May 2023.

Although the CEAP is funded for students for a year, Caddo follows them until they have completed their programs. Most programs that students are enrolled in are 18-24 months and sometimes longer depending on the remedial courses that must be taken by the student. In addition to the recruitment plan that is in place, we will add additional recruitment strategies and continue networking with the other programs in the state. One strategy we will add is the collaboration with Career Compass to identify potential students and communicate the same message for CEAP opportunities. Caddo has an identified educator who ensures barriers are removed to increase the students' success. We will continue to collaborate with the Caddo leadership team for additional suggestions, ideas, and training to enhance the program.

Thank you for giving Caddo Parish consideration to continue to fund the Louisiana Extension Academy Grant to help students have post-secondary opportunities to be independent, productive citizens of society.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Lamar Goree".

T. Lamar Goree, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Caddo Parish School Board

AGENDA ITEM IV.A.

Proposed Associate of Applied Science in Diesel Equipment Technician Delgado Community College

Background Information

Delgado Community College (DCC) has requested the Board of Regents' approval to offer an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Diesel Equipment Technician. The proposal was approved by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) Board of Supervisors and 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 proposal.

Staff Summary

The Diesel Equipment Technician AAS will equip students with the skills needed for entry-level employment as diesel technicians. The proposed 63-credit hour Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Diesel Equipment Technician includes stackable exit points, allowing students to earn a 9-credit hour Career and Technical Certificate (CTC) in Diesel A/C Technician, a 27-credit hour Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS) in Diesel Engine Technician, and a 48-credit hour Technical Diploma (TD) in Diesel Equipment Technician. The program provides both classroom instruction and hands-on shop experience, covering diagnosis and repair of engines, fuel systems, electrical systems, cooling systems, brakes, drive trains, and suspensions while ensuring proficiency in the safe use of tools and hoisting equipment. The degree will also improve graduates' competitiveness for available supervisory positions that require technical skills as well as evidence of analytical, communication, and problem-solving skills. It will also expand educational opportunities for graduates as the general education courses will transfer to baccalaureate degree programs should the student wish to pursue further education.

1. Value: Per Regents' policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.

- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** The demand for diesel equipment technicians is expected to remain robust due to the continued reliance on diesel-powered equipment across various industries, advancements in diesel technology, and an aging workforce. The information in the chart below represents Regional Labor Market Areas 1, 2, and 3, which include the New Orleans, Houma, and Baton Rouge areas.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Diesel Engine Specialists	4-star	870	910	5%	\$58,662
Heavy Equipment Mechanics	4-star	1702	1899	12%	\$56,773

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** The program was developed in response to industry demand for diesel mechanics for all vehicle sizes. Industry partners, including Terrebonne Ford/Lincoln, Hollingsworth Richards Ford, and Premier Ford, have expressed the need for trained personnel in Diesel Equipment Technology. The proposed program aligns with industry needs, providing students with

hands-on instruction and technical training.

- c. **Same or Similar In-state Programs:** Although similar AAS programs have been implemented around the state, the nearest Diesel Mechanic technical program is offered at Northshore Technical Community College, which is over 40 miles away. This program will specifically serve students located in the southeast region of Louisiana.
- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** Upon admission to DCC, students interested in the Diesel Equipment Technician program will have access to enrollment support through the School of Construction Arts and Technical Studies. Prospective student and applicant data are shared with program deans, who engage in outreach efforts to connect with those interested in the field. Retention rates for the program may vary slightly due to the availability of exit points, which allow students to earn credentials as they progress. Enrollment estimates are based on student interest and industry demand for trained diesel technicians.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	35	60	76	86
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	2	5	11

2. **Resources:** The AAS in Diesel Equipment Technology can be implemented immediately without the need for new faculty or additional resources. If enrollment grows substantially, the program may require additional faculty positions. Existing student services and administrative staff are sufficient to support the program, and no additional support staff will be needed.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Program can be implemented with current faculty.	No additional faculty are needed currently.	\$0
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	No additional equipment, technology, or facilities are needed.	\$0
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	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:** The curriculum will incorporate both in-person and hybrid course schedules. This approach will expand access to content delivery and scheduling options, particularly benefiting those balancing work and other commitments.
 - **Affordability:** Open Educational Resources (OER) will be integrated into the curriculum to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for students. Those with previously earned IBCs, military credit, certifications, or work experience can submit documentation for evaluation, potentially earning credit toward the degree. Students may also use MJ Foster if eligible to help cover costs.
 - **Partnerships:** The program will be offered in partnership with Kenworth of Louisiana, Cummins Diesel, Waste Management, LA Caterpillar, Mack Trucks, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, and Jefferson Parish Public Schools to support hands-on training and industry collaboration.
 - **Work-based learning:** Students will participate in externship experiences as part of both the Technical Diploma and Associate Degree programs, allowing them to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. Throughout their enrollment and after graduation, they will have access to career resources, including resume critiques, interview preparation, and job search strategies through

Delgado's Career Services. These students will work alongside industry professionals, gaining hands-on experience and opportunities to earn certifications.

- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** DCC will target underserved populations, including first-generation students, through a marketing approach that highlights hands-on learning opportunities and flexible class offerings, such as in-person, online, and hybrid formats. These options will accommodate students who are balancing multiple roles outside the classroom. DCC will also offer academic support through professional and faculty advisors, tutoring services, writing workshops, and career resources via Handshake. Additionally, the program will be available to high school students through dual enrollment.

Staff Analysis

The proposed AAS in Diesel Equipment Technician was developed to provide students with both hands-on technical experience as well as analytical, communication, and problem-solving classroom instruction. The program will expand employment opportunities for students with greater earning potential and career advancement in the field while serving to fill regional and state workforce needs. The program will also expand educational opportunities for graduates who wish to pursue further education at the baccalaureate level and beyond.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed AAS in Diesel Equipment Technician (CIP 47.0604) at Delgado 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 Applied Data Science 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 Applied Data Science. 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 proposal.

Staff Summary

There is a growing need within the state and nationally for professionals with expertise beyond statistics and computer science skills to transform complex data into valuable products. The proposed BS in Data Science will equip students with a strong academic foundation in mathematics, computing, data analysis, databases, and artificial intelligence, while also offering exposure to applied domains such as natural and social sciences. It is structured to be flexible and responsive to student interests and emerging workforce needs, with a substantial number of credit hours available for directed or free electives.

The BS in Applied Data Science is designed to be practical, project-based, and career-focused, preparing students to solve real-world problems using data. Students will engage in the full data science process, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and ethical decision-making. Core focus areas include business analytics, coastal modeling, educational analytics, social analytics, healthcare analytics, and quantitative biology, with future opportunities to expand into precision agriculture and artificial intelligence. Graduates of the program will be well-positioned to pursue careers as data scientists, analysts, and research specialists in settings such as hospitals, school systems, government agencies, universities, and research institutions.

1. **Value:** Per Regent’s policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.
 - a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** Louisiana is showing a rising demand for professionals to manage high volumes of data with multiple four- and five-star job areas in the sector, according to the Louisiana Workforce Commission. The proposed program will prepare students for data science and analytics careers throughout industry.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Management Analyst	5-star	4,489	5,257	17%	\$106,412
Data Scientist	4-star	1,352	1,900	41%	\$71,739
Operations Research Analyst	5-star	872	1,043	20%	\$70,969

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** LSU faculty engaged with alumni, community representatives, and prospective employers to develop the proposed program. The program aligns with

local, regional, and state workforce strategies by focusing on high-demand data science skills essential across various Louisiana industries, including healthcare, energy, finance, and information technology. By producing graduates with the analytical and technical skills needed to work with data, extract insights, and solve complex problems, the program helps meet local employers' needs and attract new businesses to the area, creating new jobs and supporting economic growth in the region.

- c. **Same or Similar In-State Programs:** Despite the rising need for skilled data science professionals, there remains a limited number of in-state programs producing graduates with the depth and breadth of training required to meet workforce expectations. SUNO currently offers the only standalone bachelor's degree in data science. LSU's BS in Applied Data Science will expand access to high-demand skills, support statewide economic development, and help retain talent by offering students more in-state educational pathways aligned with current and future job market needs.
- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** LSU anticipates strong interest in the proposed program among current and prospective students, attracting students with interests in mathematics, computer science, and artificial intelligence.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	25	50	105	160
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	0	23

2. **Resources:** Existing faculty, graduate teaching assistants and program leadership are currently in place to support program operations.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty will be used to implement and support the program.	No new faculty are needed.	\$0
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	No new facilities or equipment are needed.	\$0
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	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:** The program will initially be offered on-campus, but plans are already underway to provide an online option as well. This will enable online students, some of whom live in remote areas and/or have family or job responsibilities, to pursue post-secondary education without disrupting employment or requiring travel to the LSU A&M campus.
 - **Affordability:** Open Educational Resources (OER) will be promoted in all courses where applicable to reduce student costs and increase access to course materials. The department will also align with LSU transfer agreements and recognize learning assessments from accredited institutions, including community colleges.
 - **Partnerships:** The proposed program has received strong backing from community-based organizations and industry partners. INTEGER, a Columbia, South Carolina-based applied technology research company; NVIDIA Higher Education and Research, an American multinational technology corporation headquartered in Santa Clara, California; and Our Lady of the Lake Health, a

large regional medical center located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have submitted letters of support. These letters reflect a shared interest in future collaboration and internship development.

- **Work-based Learning**: The proposed program offers students the opportunity to engage in undergraduate research that aligns with their academic interests. Students are encouraged to participate in research projects across various departments such as biology, mathematics, sociology, and geology, and can earn academic credit for their work. When funding is available, faculty may also provide paid research positions.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations**: The LSU Department of Mathematics participates in the College of Science freshman seminar series (SCI 1001), which was designed to foster a sense of belonging among first-year students and address success gaps among populations of students. This course is strongly suggested in the Applied Data Science BS curriculum during a student's first semester and will count toward free elective credits.

Staff Analysis

LSU's proposed Bachelor of Science in Applied Data Science is designed to prepare students for careers in high-demand fields across Louisiana and beyond. Built with input from industry and aligned with workforce needs, the program combines training in mathematics, computing, data analysis, and artificial intelligence with applications in healthcare, education, social science, and environmental modeling. The curriculum is structured around practical, project-based learning to ensure that graduates are equipped to collect, analyze, and interpret data to solve real-world problems and make informed, ethical decisions in professional settings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Applied Data Science (CIP 30.7001) 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.C.

Proposed Bachelor of Science in Disaster Preparedness and Response Louisiana State University of Alexandria

Background Information

Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA) requests Board of Regents approval to offer a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Disaster Preparedness and Response. The proposal was approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors then submitted to Regents for consideration. The program was favorably reviewed by Chief Academic Officers statewide and was included in the institution's 2024–2025 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

Disaster Preparedness and Response is a rapidly growing academic discipline that helps students develop the essential leadership, strategic, and tactical skills that are required for effective crisis planning and for mitigating the effects of actual disasters, both natural and man-made. The need for competent, well-trained, and ethical professionals in this area is becoming more evident each year, given the rising costs and frequency of disasters and the fact that they are becoming more variable, complex, and difficult to predict. The proposed BS in Disaster Preparedness and Response is designed to provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to acquire the critical knowledge and skills necessary to effectively plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters, and, thus, increase the number of trained professionals capable of assisting communities, non-profit organizations, businesses, and local, regional, and state agencies during times of crisis.

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 information in the chart below is specific to parishes located in Louisiana Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA) 6, where LSUA is located.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Emergency Management Director	4-star	134	139	4%	\$88,631
Compliance Officer	4-star	188	196	4%	\$70,000

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** Faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice and Civic Sciences, the academic unit in which the proposed program will be housed, are heavily engaged with employers, community representatives, alumni, regional economic development organizations, and other external stakeholders. Conversations among faculty, along with input from local and regional law enforcement, emergency services, and relevant state agencies, including the Governor's Office Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOSHEP), Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office, and the Winn Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, helped shape the program's design and demonstrated its relevance to Louisiana's workforce.
- c. **Same or Similar In-State Programs:** Although a similar program (BS in Disaster Management) was recently approved at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, this proposed degree is specifically focused

on disaster preparedness and response, two specific components of the broader process. Moreover, this would be the first program of its kind in central Louisiana.

- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** Since 2015, LSUA has offered a Disaster Science and Emergency Management concentration within the Bachelor of General Studies. That program has seen steady enrollment and graduation rates, with a growing interest in disaster management education. A recent student survey found that 74% of respondents were interested in the proposed BS in Disaster Preparedness and Response, with 42% likely to switch from the current concentration.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	20	38	59	79
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	4	8

2. **Resources:** The program would benefit from hiring an additional tenure-track faculty member; however, the college has a plan for proceeding with the program if approval to make the hire is not granted right away. This includes utilizing strong adjunct faculty members and a full-time faculty member in Political Science who also teaches Disaster Science courses each semester.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty will support the proposed program.	One full-time instructor	Yr. 1+: \$84,000
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	No additional facilities are needed.	\$0
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:** The proposed program will be offered both fully online and on campus to provide flexible options for a diverse student population. Online students will complete courses in accelerated seven-week sessions to accommodate work and family responsibilities. On-campus students will have access to traditional 15-week semesters, as well as the option to enroll in online seven-week courses, allowing them to tailor their schedules to meet academic and personal needs.
- **Affordability:** The proposed program will prioritize affordability by using Open Educational Resources (OER) whenever possible to reduce or eliminate textbook costs for students. LSUA's existing Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy allows students to earn credit for military training, FEMA certifications, EMT credentials, and other documented professional experience. Transfer agreements with community colleges across the state will expand access to the program, especially for students with associate degrees.
- **Partnerships:** LSUA has long-standing relationships with local and regional industries, community-based organizations, and other institutions, many of whom have pledged support for the proposed program by providing training opportunities for current students and job opportunities for program graduates. Examples include Fort Johnson, Rapides Regional Hospital, CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital, the Louisiana Department of Health, and the American Red Cross. Collaborations

with agencies such as the Alexandria Fire Department, the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security, and CLECO will further support real-world learning and professional connections for students.

- **Work-based Learning**: The proposed degree will include an internship course that will be required of all students in the program and is designed to provide practical experience in the field. The course involves supervised work in national, state, or local government or private agencies concerned with disaster preparedness and response. Recent internship venues for LSUA students enrolled in the BGS concentration include GOHSEP and local and state Offices of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.
- **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. Every student admitted to LSUA is automatically considered for available university scholarships and invited to apply for any of the scholarships provided through the LSUA Foundation. Many foundation scholarships are designed to meet the needs of first-generation college students and/or students who can demonstrate financial need.

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.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Disaster Preparedness and Response (CIP 43.0302) at Louisiana State University of Alexandria 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 Medical Laboratory Science LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans

Background Information

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – New Orleans (LSUHSC-NO) requests Board of Regents' approval to offer a Master of Science (MS) in Medical Laboratory Sciences. The proposal was approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors then submitted to Regents for consideration. The proposal was reviewed by external consultant, Dr. Cliff Cymrot, Program Director for Medical Laboratory Sciences at George Washington University, who was very 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

The proposed Master of Science in Medical Laboratory Science (MSMLS) is a 62-credit hour graduate program designed for individuals with a bachelor's degree seeking to enter the medical laboratory science profession. While LSUHSC-NO already offers an undergraduate pathway in this field, the MSMLS provides a more advanced educational experience that prepares students for national certification and careers in clinical laboratories. Through intensive coursework and hands-on training, students will develop competencies in diagnostic testing, laboratory management, and quality assurance. The curriculum also includes leadership development and a practicum, equipping graduates for supervisory roles in hospitals and reference laboratories. This program supports a steady pipeline of credentialed professionals to address the healthcare lab manager system's staffing needs.

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 qualified laboratory professionals continues to outpace supply nationwide. This program will address that shortage by providing focused training in laboratory science, equipping graduates with the skills needed to contribute across healthcare, research, diagnostics, and public health settings.

Related Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ¹
Medical Scientist/Clinical Lab Scientist	4-star	840	939	12%	\$76,444

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** The healthcare sector is currently facing a critical shortage of medical laboratory professionals across the country and in Louisiana, with vacancy rates in the Greater New Orleans region reaching 18–20%. Local hospitals and labs are struggling to meet rising demand for diagnostic testing, especially as public health needs expand. The existing bachelor's program in Medical Laboratory Science enrolls many students who already hold a bachelor's degree, signaling demand for a more advanced degree option. The proposed program would create a career ladder to develop future leaders in a field that continues to grow as the instruments and technologies used to detect disease and monitor treatment become more sophisticated.

- c. Same or Similar In-State Programs: This would be the first master's-level program in Medical Laboratory Science in the state. Currently, LA Tech, McNeese, ULM, LSUA, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, and LSUHSC-NO offer bachelor's degrees in medical laboratory science, which this program could serve for students wishing to pursue further education.
- d. Student Enrollment and Completion: Advising conversations with students in LSUHSC-NO's undergraduate Medical Laboratory Science program revealed that seventy-two percent already hold a bachelor's degree. Many of these students expressed interest in pursuing further education through a more advanced and financially accessible option. Their academic backgrounds and future goals suggest a strong demand for a graduate program that builds on their existing training and meets a need not currently addressed by available programs. The program will enroll a cohort of 10 new students every spring semester.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	10	20	20	20
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	10	10	10

2. **Resources:** The MSMLS 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 to assist in teaching laboratory courses.	Yr 1: \$106,400 Yr 2: \$110,656 Yr 3: \$115,083 Yr 4+: \$119,658
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing offices and classrooms are sufficient to support the program.	Minimal costs for classroom lab supplies will be needed.	Yr 1+: \$9,670
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	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: The proposed MSMLS program is designed to combine the convenience of online coursework with the hands-on benefits of in-person laboratory training. While the majority of the curriculum will be delivered remotely to support flexibility for students, essential laboratory components will take place in person to ensure the development of practical skills in a controlled setting.
- Affordability: The program will use Open Educational Resources (OER) to replace traditional textbooks and reduce the overall cost of course materials. Additionally, the department will pursue employer-funded tuition support similar to its existing partnership with LCMC Health, which currently offers up to three semesters of paid tuition and fees for eligible undergraduate students. A similar funding model will be developed for students enrolled in the MSMLS program.

- **Partnerships:** LSUHSC-NO Department of Medical Laboratory Science has well-established partnerships with over 15 local and surrounding hospitals where students will complete clinical practicums and gain hands-on training in professional healthcare settings. The proposed program also received letters of support from Ochsner Health System Laboratory leadership and the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health Laboratory Director.
- **Work-based Learning:** The proposed program includes experiential learning practicum courses that are discipline-specific, placing students in affiliate hospital laboratories where they apply classroom knowledge in a professional setting to develop additional practical skills and real-world applications.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** The proposed program offers a hybrid model providing a more flexible schedule for students with financial, work, or family obligations.

Staff Analysis

The proposed MS in Medical Laboratory Science (MSMLS) will offer advanced training in diagnostic testing, laboratory management, and quality assurance. With a curriculum that includes leadership development and a practicum, the MSMLS prepares graduates for supervisory roles in hospital and reference laboratories. External reviewer Dr. Cliff Cymrot of George Washington University described the program as realistic in terms of financial sustainability and curriculum logistics and noted that it meets a clear regional and state need.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Master of Science in Medical Laboratory Sciences (CIP 51.1005) at LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution’s 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.E.

Proposed Bachelor of Arts in Social Work Nicholls State University

Background Information

Nicholls State University (Nicholls) requests Board of Regents approval to establish a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work. The proposal was approved by the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System (ULS) and submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration. The proposal was reviewed by Chief Academic Officers statewide, and the proposed program was included in the institution's 2023–2024 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

The proposed Bachelor of Arts in Social Work is designed to develop evidence-based, generalist social work practitioners prepared for entry-level professional roles serving individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The degree will meet the standards set by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which is required for licensure in Louisiana and many other states. The proposed program will include more than 400 internship hours to integrate academic knowledge with practical experience and prepare students for graduate-level study. Graduates will be eligible for advanced standing in Master of Social Work (MSW) programs, significantly reducing the time and financial cost of obtaining the MSW, which is required for clinical licensure.

1. **Value:** Per Regent's policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.
- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** The southern parishes in which Nicholls primarily serves have higher poverty rates and lower educational attainment rates than the national average. Coupled with poverty and poor education are the high rates of obesity and medical issues. The BA in Social Work will focus on resource development and community organization skills that would facilitate services to the above-mentioned populations. The data in the chart below is reflective of Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA) 3, where Nicholls is located.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Social and Community Service Managers	4	80	94	18%	\$77,452
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	3	109	140	28%	\$49,612
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	3	479	534	11%	\$42,321

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** The Social Work Advisory Board is composed of regional Social Workers, retired and employed, within the tri-parish area who provide guidance in curriculum development, employment needs, and field work. This board has provided consultation to the Nicholls Sociology program's Social Work Concentration since 2017.
- c. **Same or Similar In-State Programs:** Currently, seven public postsecondary institutions in Louisiana (SLU, ULM, SUBR, GSU, LSU, NSU and SUNO) offer undergraduate degrees in social work and collectively

graduate a 3-year average of 233 students. According to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, there are 279 current job openings for social service providers at the bachelor's level. The program proposed by Nicholls would complement the existing programs and help meet the growing need for social services workers, with particular emphasis on rural, southern Louisiana. The program would be the first in the institution's primary service area of Terrebonne, Lafourche, and St. Mary parishes.

- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** The proposed program responds to growing student interest and workforce demand in social work. Currently, over half of the sociology majors at Nicholls are pursuing the social work concentration. Based on the results of a student survey, current students in this concentration would pursue this new program.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	13	28	44	56
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	0	13

2. **Resources:** The proposed program will be supported by existing faculty during years one and two, requiring no new hires during this period. In year three, one full-time faculty member may be added to meet instructional needs if enrollment grows, expanding the responsibilities of the Field Supervisor.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Existing faculty in the department will support the program.	One additional full-time faculty may be hired in Year 3.	Yr. 3+: \$50,000
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	Funding for Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation fees will be needed.	Yr. 1: \$12,500 Yr. 2: \$7,500 Yr. 3: \$7,000 Yr. 4: \$10,500
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 will be delivered through a combination of face-to-face instruction, hybrid, and asynchronous online courses.
- **Affordability:** Nicholls will support affordability in the program by using Open Educational Resources (OERs) when available and minimizing textbook costs. The program will align with Louisiana Transfer Pathways and approved General Elective courses to ensure transferability and cost efficiency. Efforts are underway to work with stakeholders to establish scholarships and additional program funding to further reduce financial barriers for students.
- **Partnerships:** The Department of Social Sciences at Nicholls has developed strong partnerships with regional agencies, including the Department of Public Health, Terrebonne General Hospital, Start Corporation, and the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office. These collaborative relationships support curriculum alignment with local workforce needs. Faculty regularly engage with community partners through the Social Work Advisory Board, composed of local professionals who help assess emerging trends and provide input on program development. In addition, students benefit from the annual

Social Work Panel held each March, where they gain insight into the profession through direct interaction with practitioners in the field.

- **Work-based Learning:** As part of the program, each student will be required to complete a 480-hour internship and participate in service-learning and community-based activities.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** As a First Generation and Veteran-friendly university, Nicholls supports students through faculty participation in First Generation initiatives and collaboration with the university's veteran coordinator. Each student in the program will be assigned a dedicated advisor who provides academic guidance, mentorship, and assistance with financial planning and scholarships when needed. The program will also allow students currently employed in the social service field to complete their required internship hours at their place of employment, offering flexibility for working professionals.

Staff Analysis

The proposed Bachelor of Arts in Social Work program will qualify graduates for advanced standing in Master of Social Work programs, accelerating their path to licensure in Louisiana. These professionals will be well-positioned to strengthen social services and improve community well-being across the state. The addition of a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work program at Nicholls State University would further expand the pipeline of Licensed Master Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers, particularly benefiting underserved rural areas in southern Louisiana.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (CIP 44.0701) at Nicholls State University, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.F.

Proposed Bachelor of Arts in Recording Arts University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Background Information

University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) requests Board of Regents' approval to offer a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Recording Arts. 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- included in the institution's 2024–2025 Academic Plan.

Staff Summary

The proposed BA in Recording Arts will be created from an existing successful concentration within the BA in Music. The proposed degree is a specialized program developed to serve students interested in commercial music production, live sound, and computer-based music creation. The program was created in response to a growing demand for focused training in the recording arts, as students seek preparation for the practical and technical aspects of music production in an evolving industry. Utilizing existing resources from the institution's music and recording arts programs, the curriculum emphasizes technical proficiency, hands-on experience, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Students will gain real-world skills through studio work, live sound production, and industry-engaged projects.

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 advancement of technology, the demand for skilled individuals is steadily increasing. The proposed program is designed to prepare graduates for careers including Producers and Directors, Sound Engineering Technicians, and Audio and Video Technicians.

Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change ²	Average Salary ²
Film and Video Editors	3-star	63	79	25%	\$52,873
Audio and Video Technicians	3-star	703	808	5%	\$45,468

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** Industry leaders have emphasized the need for graduates with both creative and technical expertise in music production. The proposed program aligns its curriculum with these employer expectations by focusing on hands-on training in recording technology, software proficiency, and industry-relevant practices.
- c. **Same or Similar In-State Programs:** The proposed program would be the first of its kind at a public post-secondary institution in Louisiana. The only similar program is a BA in Music Industry Studies offered by Loyola University in New Orleans.
- d. **Student Enrollment and Completion:** Survey results from current and prospective students, along with flourishing enrollment in the Recording Arts concentration, indicate a strong interest in courses focused on music production and related content. Some students currently enrolled in the Recording Arts concentration could become graduates of the proposed program during the first year of implementation.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	59	63	64	67
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	35	45	46	48

2. **Resources:** To support full implementation of the proposed program, the institution anticipates adding one new faculty line at the Assistant Professor level. This position will provide dedicated leadership and instructional capacity as the program grows. Start-up costs for technology and equipment are expected, along with annual software license renewals.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	There is currently staff supporting the program.	One new faculty member will be hired.	Yr. 1+: \$62,000
Physical Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	Recording studio equipment will be needed along with several pieces of technology and license renewals.	Yr. 1: \$201,000 Yr. 2+: \$25,000
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	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:** The proposed program's courses will be offered during the day and evenings using the traditional face-to-face instruction format.
 - **Affordability:** The proposed degree was designed with affordability in mind. All discipline-specific courses are designated as Affordable Educational Resources (AER) and comply with Act 125/SB117, which called for greater availability and use of affordable textbooks. None of the discipline courses require textbooks, and no additional instructional materials need to be purchased by students.
 - **Partnerships:** The proposed Bachelor of Arts in Recording Arts will actively pursue partnerships with local recording studios, music venues, and community organizations. These collaborations will create pathways for internships, mentorships, and job placements, enriching the educational experience.
 - **Work-based Learning:** Upon approval, faculty plan to incorporate an elective paid and for-credit internship into the program to facilitate the application of classroom knowledge in professional settings, enhance skill development, and improve employability upon degree completion.
 - **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations:** The proposed program will help increase access to the music industry for students from diverse backgrounds, including low-income, minority, and adult learners. The program is particularly valuable for students from under-resourced communities who may lack the traditional instrumental or choral performance background, often due to the absence of music programs in K–12 schools. By offering a viable path into music-making and industry-related fields, this program can help to ensure that students, regardless of their prior experience, can thrive and achieve long-term career success, fostering both economic mobility and social inclusion.

Staff Analysis

The proposed BA in Recording Arts was developed in response to growing student interest in commercial music production, live sound, and computer-based music creation. As the music industry evolves, students increasingly seek a focused curriculum that prepares them for the practical and technical aspects of music production. The proposed degree aims to bridge the gap between artistic creativity and technical proficiency, equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in a competitive and rapidly changing industry.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Recording Arts (CIP 50.0913) at University of Louisiana at Lafayette, with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM IV.G.

Proposed PhD in Applied Computing and Information Sciences University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Background Information

University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) requests Board of Regents' approval to offer a PhD in Applied Computing and Information Sciences. The proposal was approved by the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System (ULS) then submitted to Regents for consideration. The proposal was reviewed by external consultant, Dr. Fred Martin, Professor and Chair, Computer Science, University of Texas at San Antonio. Dr. Martin was 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

The proposed PhD in Applied Computing and Information Sciences will prepare students to apply the scientific method to computing technologies while training them to design, maintain, and adapt systems that address real-world needs. Rooted in informatics, the program explores how people interact with computer systems and how those systems store, process, and manage information. It emphasizes human-computer interaction, data systems, and information architecture. The curriculum blends core principles of information sciences with applied training in usability engineering, decision support systems, data security, and network design. Unlike traditional Computer Science or Engineering programs, this PhD focuses less on mathematical theory or hardware and more on organizational and user-centered aspects of computing, including machine learning, data science, and interface design. Through interdisciplinary coursework and a focus on scientific reasoning, the program prepares students for research and leadership roles in academia, industry, government, and the nonprofit sector.

1. **Value:** Per Regent's policy, this program meets the criteria of a Quality Credential of Value.

- a. **Workforce Demand and Job Opportunities:** The proposed program will address the current and expected demand for well-prepared computing and information science researchers and professionals across the state, including the Acadiana region.

Related Occupation	LWC Star Rating ¹	Current Jobs ²	Projected Jobs 2034 ²	% Change	Average Salary
Computer and Information Research Scientists	5 star	126	155	23.3%	\$111,259
University Professor	3-star	15,143	16,074	6%	\$89,553

¹Source – LWC

²Source – Lightcast (in Louisiana)

- b. **Curriculum Alignment with Employer Needs:** According to Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Louisiana continues to enjoy growth in the technology sector. Software and digital media clusters are emerging in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lafayette, and Shreveport. The curriculum for the proposed degree program was developed to be sufficiently generalized to allow graduates to find employment within any of these emerging technology clusters. Examples include CGI and Perficient, IT and Software Consulting firms in Lafayette, IBM in Baton Rouge, CenturyLink in Monroe and Meta's new data center campus in Richland Parish.

- c. Same or Similar In-State Programs: While Tulane University and Louisiana State University offer doctorate programs in computer science, the proposed program would be the first PhD in Applied Computing and Information Sciences offered by a public institution in the state of Louisiana.
- d. Student Enrollment and Completion: Solid enrollments in ULL's existing BS and MS Informatics programs will provide the foundation for enrollment in this program. The MS Informatics program will serve as the primary source of prospective graduate students for the proposed PhD in Applied Computing and Information Sciences.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
TOTAL Estimated Program Enrollment	12	25	42	61
TOTAL Estimated Program Graduates	0	0	2	7

2. **Resources**: While current faculty will provide support for the proposed program, implementation will require three new faculty lines over the next five years along with additional support staff to assist the graduate coordinator and a temporary instructor to assist with teaching lower level courses when current graduate faculty are assigned to teach graduate courses in Informatics. The University will allocate six graduate assistants in Yr. 1, with that number growing to 21 in Yr. 4. In addition to tuition and fees helping to offset the cost of the proposed program, the faculty of the School of Computing and Informatics will also apply for grants. Over the past five years, this faculty has averaged over \$10M annually in state, federal, and private grant funding, and the University expects this grant funding success to continue or increase due to new and anticipated hires.

	Current	Needed	Additional Costs
Faculty	Current faculty will provide support for the proposed program.	Four new faculty will be needed over the first four years to support the rigor and quality of research and pedagogy. One additional support staff will be needed.	Yr. 1: \$215,000 Yr. 2: \$331,200 Yr. 3: \$452,048 Yr. 4: \$467,729
Physical (Facilities, Equipment, Library, & Technology)	Existing facilities are adequate to support the program.	Upgrades and maintenance to hardware infrastructure will be needed.	Yr. 1: \$8,000 Yr. 2: \$5,000 Yr. 3: \$5,000 Yr. 4: \$13,000
Student Support	Existing resources will meet the needs of the program for the foreseeable future.	Funding will be allocated for multiple graduate assistants each year.	Yr. 1: \$172,080 Yr. 2: \$361,368 Yr. 3: \$568,260 Yr. 4: \$683,970

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: Most courses in the proposed program will be delivered in person using traditional methods. In the future, individual courses may be offered in online or hybrid formats, based on student needs and instructional opportunities.
 - Affordability: The School of Computing and Informatics Graduate Advisory Committee reviews

transfer credit applications in accordance with institutional policy. Coursework completed at accredited institutions may be applied toward the PhD program's requirements, subject to committee approval.

- **Partnerships**: The proposed program has received support from academic, community and industry partners. ULL plans to leverage its existing partnerships to create an educational and career pipeline for the proposed degree program. Those partners include GGI Technologies and Solutions, Apex Innovations, IBM, Apple, and Amazon among others.
- **Work-based Learning**: Graduate students in the program may pursue work-based learning through INFX 593, an existing graduate internship course offered as an elective. This course allows students to gain practical experience in the field while earning academic credit as part of their individualized degree plans.
- **Other program attributes that contribute to closing the achievement gap with underserved populations**: The proposed new program will work to close the achievement gap with underserved populations including low-income, minority, and adult learners by actively recruiting Ronald E. McNair and Louis Stokes-Louisiana Alliance for Minority Participation (LS-LAMP) scholars to the program. Faculty will also promote the McNair Graduate Scholars Program, which offers a graduate application fee and tuition/fee waiver.

Staff Analysis

The proposed program will build on ULL's strong programs in Computer Science and Computer Engineering and Informatics and will address the current and expected demand for well-prepared computing and information science researchers and professionals across the state. External reviewer Dr. Fred Martin was very supportive of the proposal, stating that "...the planned program will greatly strengthen the School of Computing & Informatics at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, serving its regional and state community with national impact."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends conditional approval of the proposed PhD in Applied Computing and Information Sciences (CIP 11.0104) at University of Louisiana at Lafayette with a progress report on program implementation submitted as part of the institution's 2025–2026 Academic Plan.

AGENDA ITEM V.

Initial Approval and Conditional Designation as a Center of Research Excellence Louisiana State University and Louisiana State University Agricultural Center Aquatic Germplasm and Genetic Resources Center of Research Excellence

Background Information

The Board of Regents' Center of Excellence designation was established by the Board in June 2013 and signifies that the designated unit is a statewide academic, research, or workforce leader in its focus area. All Centers of Excellence must demonstrate the following attributes: a strong performance record, a clearly and finitely defined area of expertise, a range of opportunities in its area of designation (academic, research, or workforce), be engaged with the greater community, and be a hallmark of the institution recognized as uniquely strong in its focal area. A Center of Research Excellence is a highly specialized research unit that is well supported through external funding and partnerships, develops new knowledge, enhances the research productivity of faculty, integrates education and research, and positively impacts economic development in the state.

Louisiana State University (LSU) and the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter) are jointly requesting initial approval of the proposed center and Center of Excellence designation of the Aquatic Germplasm and Genetic Resources Research Center of Excellence. The request was approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors and submitted to Regents for consideration.

Staff Summary

1. Description

The term *genetic resources* applies to any form of genetic material that is of current known value or of unknown potential value in the future. Humans have been protecting genetic resources in the form of crop seeds for thousands of years. In the past century we have seen multibillion-dollar global markets emerge for improved genetics in agriculture, especially in the form of frozen sperm for livestock. Given this background, it is surprising to realize that aquatic species do not have comparable systems for protecting and commercializing genetic resources. This is especially striking given the importance of fish and shellfish to global economies and human livelihoods. For example, can we imagine a Louisiana coast that cannot support fish, shrimp, oyster harvests, or rice farms, and the Atchafalaya Basin without crawfish? There are thousands of aquatic species of economic importance around the world that lack protection of their gene pools, and highly lucrative markets for improved genetics that cannot be developed because of a global lack of germplasm repository capability. The Aquatic Germplasm and Genetic Resource Center (AGGRC) was established to directly address these problems, and its members have been recognized as the leading group in the world for these activities for more than 20 years.

Aquatic species like fish, salamanders, frogs, and sea slugs have seen increasing use over the past few decades in biomedical studies. Now, agencies such as the NIH invest billions of dollars into research using these animals (called "biomedical models"). Due to a relatively late entry into this area, most aquatic species do not have germplasm repositories available to protect them from losses of valuable genetics due to accidents or disease, and the resources are mostly maintained as live animals. Aquatic animal models will play an ever-increasing role in disease research in the future, and they are already leading to breakthroughs in a variety of biomedical fields. By preserving this genetic material, researchers can ensure the continued existence and evolution of these species, even if their populations are threatened.

2. Objectives and Evidence of Excellence

The AGGRC team currently pursues its mission with an entrepreneurial mindset through four major programs: 1) applied and fundamental research, 2) technology innovation, 3) industrial-scale services, and 4) community engagement. Each of these programs has its own focus while at the same time is fully integrated

as an interactive whole. The AGGRC is primarily self-supported, and the team submits an average of one grant proposal per month (and often more) to support its operations. This includes a commitment to develop and maintain state-of-the-art capabilities, and as such, the team has obtained more than \$2 million specifically for improving and repurposing its 75-year-old facility.

The AGGRC staff has developed strong partnerships with federal agencies (e.g., NIH and USDA), state agencies, industry partners, and academic collaborators within and outside the LSU campus for three decades. Since its establishment in 2014, the AGGRC facility has been directly awarded more than \$8 million in 41 grants and contracts from a broad range of funding sources, including federal agencies, state funds, and university support. With designation as the proposed Center of Research Excellence, the AGGRC will be on a much stronger footing in developing and maintaining partnerships and funding opportunities in the next five years

Over the past 3 decades, the AGGRC team has studied hundreds of aquatic organisms and produced more than 250 peer-reviewed publications and two books.

3. Resources and Administration

Dr. Terrence Tiersch is the Director of AGGRC, overseeing operations and coordinating programs with two Associate Directors (Mike Christensen and Dr. Yue Liu) and Assistant Director (Dr. Jack Koch). The leadership team consists of three faculty members: Dr. Tiersch, Dr. Liu, and Dr. Koch, who hold faculty appointments through the School of Renewable Natural Resources (SRNR). Dr. Tiersch currently has a 90% research appointment with the AgCenter and a 10% teaching appointment at the SRNR through the LSU College of Agriculture (LSU-COA), while Dr. Liu and Dr. Koch have 100% research appointments at the AgCenter, with volunteer teaching activities through the SRNR. The AGGRC has been approved by the AgCenter to become a separate Cost Center with an office coordinator to manage accounting, hiring, and sponsored program coordination within the AGGRC, and to directly connect with the Accounting, Human Resource Management, and Office of Sponsored Programs at the AgCenter. With respect to Facilities and Administration (F&A) funds generated through grants and contracts at the AGGRC, 50% will be retained at AgCenter, and at least 25% will be returned to the AGGRC to support facility maintenance and operations. The proposed Center of Research Excellence would not affect the present structure of the Campus. The AGGRC will remain within the LSU AgCenter under the supervision of Executive Associate Vice President of Agriculture and Director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station.

The AGGRC facility is located at the site of the former LSU Dairy Improvement Center. It spans approximately 3 acres adjacent to the LSU campus and encompasses 24,000 square feet on the main foundation, along with several additional outbuildings totaling around 7,000 square feet. This proximity to the LSU campus greatly facilitates travel and collaboration for faculty and students. Since 2014, the development of the AGGRC has involved continuous alterations and renovations to repurpose the facilities from livestock use to accommodate aquatic species. For instance, supplemental funding from the NIH has allowed for the conversion of a former bull semen collection arena into an aquatic animal conditioning facility, as well as the transformation of a cattle barn into a 3-D printing farm, fabrication shop, and additional animal husbandry spaces. Consequently, this facility is truly unique for aquatic research, and its extensive capabilities in support of repository development are unmatched anywhere else in the world.

4. Funding and Budget

The existence of the AGGRC has been driven by external funding that includes recurrent multimillion-dollar awards (e.g., NIH R24 grants). Successfully competing at this high level is dependent on activities that go beyond individual projects and programs, and it involves recognition at a sustained level as a national resource center. The AGGRC has achieved a high level of capability and recognition and must find ways to ensure that this status can be made more sustainable. Becoming an officially designated Center of Research Excellence by the Board of Regents would greatly advance that ambition and would lock in the benefits offered by the AGGRC in economic and workforce development, and in education and technology

development.

The AGGRC is partially supported by the LSU AgCenter, although its operations are primarily funded by external grants and contracts. The salaries of the Director and the Associate Director-Building Coordinator are funded through hard salary lines. To support future development, the LSU AgCenter has begun the process to establish the AGGRC as a separate Cost Center and has committed funding for an Office Coordinator position that is under preparation for recruitment. The salaries of all other members in the AGGRC and most costs for facility maintenance are funded through self-generated grants and contracts.

Staff Analysis

The mission of the AGGRC is to provide global leadership in the protection and management of aquatic genetic resources through germplasm repository development to support aquaculture, natural fisheries, biomedical research, conservation of imperiled species, and food security. A tradition of excellence in securing external funding and research in this area will position LSU to lead the state and the nation in this work.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Senior Staff recommends approval of the Aquatic Germplasm and Genetic Resources Center of Research Excellence with conditional designation as a Center of Research Excellence for a period of two years. A request for continued authorization and designation as a Center of Research Excellence is due October 1, 2027.

AGENDA ITEM VI.

Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund Awards

Background Information

Act 57 of the 2020 Regular Legislative Session commissioned the Cybersecurity Education Management Council (CEMC) and created the Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund (CTIF). The CTIF provides a mechanism for donations and/or appropriations of funding to support the development of degree and certificate programs in cybersecurity fields offered by public postsecondary education institutions. The goal of the fund is to develop, train, produce, and retain Louisiana's workforce-ready cybersecurity professionals and improve cybersecurity literacy across industry sectors through programmatic support to institutions.

In FY 2024–25, CTIF received \$1,000,000 in state general funds to be distributed based on the CEMC's recommendations. The CEMC issued a request for applications to invite submissions from any eligible public postsecondary institution.

Cybersecurity Talent Initiative Fund Distribution of Dollars

The CEMC reviewed applications submitted under the 2025 Request for Applications process and approved funding for the following projects:

New Projects

- Southeastern University: Building Career Pathways: A Workforce Certification Initiative - \$124,640
- University of Louisiana-Monroe: AI-Powered Cybersecurity Education to Address the Industry Skills Gap - \$129,532

Sustained Projects

- Fletcher Technical Community College: Enhancing Experiential Learning for Cybersecurity Honors Students to Strengthen Workforce Readiness - \$150,000
- Bossier Parish Community College: The LA Cyber Academy (Statewide) - \$161,516
- Northwestern State University: Central Louisiana Cybersecurity Talent Enhancement Program - \$40,000
- LSU Shreveport: Comprehensive Cyber Talent Pipeline - \$133,243
- Southern University A&M: Empowering Cybersecurity Leaders by Establishing an Executive Master's Program in Cybersecurity, Mentorship, and Industry-Partnered Certificates - \$155,265
- University of New Orleans: Development of an Advanced Cybersecurity Certificate Program - \$105,804

Strategic Alignment

The approved projects align with state workforce development priorities and demonstrate:

- Strong industry partnerships with at least 25% private sector matching funds
- Clear pathways to employment in cybersecurity fields
- Focus on underrepresented groups in cybersecurity education
- Alignment with NIST Cybersecurity Framework and NICE Workforce Framework standards

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is for informational purposes only. No action is required.