

NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY

REVIEW

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Recommendations are numbered and in bold print throughout the text

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I. INTRODUCTION

On January 28 through January 31, 2003, a team of four persons, each widely experienced in higher education and none having any present or past association with Nicholls State University, reviewed the general condition of the University (Appendix A). The Review included assessing materials and conducting interviews from November 21, 2002 through March 14, 2003.

The purposes of the Review were to assess the general condition of the University from an objective and uninvested but informed perspective and to assist the System office and the University in conducting the Presidential search process. It was felt that a completely objective assessment would:

- (1) Candidly identify and address issues affecting Nicholls and help establish a tentative agenda for the immediate future;
- (2) Be of value to prospective presidential candidates;
- (3) Assist the Search Committee in establishing presidential criteria; and
- (4) Help the Board of Supervisors and the Search Committee assess and illuminate conditions that would make the presidency more attractive to first-rate candidates.

In addition, the Review might offer these benefits:

- (1) All concerned parties would have a more accurate impression of Nicholls and consider more specific and realistic plans and expectations.
- (2) Faculty, administrators, students, alumni, elected and appointed officials, the media, and the general public would consider the report to be a legitimate and less biased opinion of Nicholls that might differ from their own.
- (3) The region, the state and beyond would have a heightened awareness of, and interest in Nicholls because of the involvement in the Review and a public report on the results.

The Review considered the following in terms of strengths, limitations, and/or aspirations:

- General condition of Nicholls
- Academic programs
- Faculty
- Students
- Administration
- Technology
- Budget and finance
- Intercollegiate athletics
- Fund-raising
- Public relations (including alumni and legislative relations)

- Governance
- Other issues and conditions presented during the course of this Review.

Before beginning interviews, team members read and evaluated materials assembled by Nicholls staff including the departing President of Nicholls, and the vice presidents for academic affairs, business affairs, student affairs/enrollment services and institutional advancement at Nicholls. All counted, interview and focus groups included 275 persons including faculty, students, staff, alumni, elected/appointed officials, area residents, local business persons, members and staff of the Board, media representatives, benefactors, and potential benefactors, persons selected because of special knowledge and randomly selected persons from the community (Appendix B). Interviewees were selected based on position, stratified random sample, and random sample. All interviews followed a general format that included 18 separate areas (Appendix C).

Interviewers were to ask about, but not press, each of the areas and all interviewed were advised that their opinions might be used in the final report but *without* attribution.

Readers should bear in mind that although much of the Review can be documented, much of it is based on the opinions of those persons interviewed. Wherever the opinions of the Review team are expressed, it shall be obvious.

This Review is the exclusive work of James L. Fisher, Ltd and should not be attributed to individual members of the Review team.

II. OVERVIEW

Nicholls State University (NSU), located in the heart of historic Cajun Country in Thibodaux, Louisiana, is in many ways an undiscovered treasure. Though not well known even to some of the citizens of Louisiana, the University has in its 54-year history assembled a record of admirably strong performance. NSU has become the centerpiece for educational, economic and social development in South Central Louisiana as it is the only four-year institution of higher education in that region.

The University traces its history to 1948, when a two-year branch of Louisiana State University (Francis T. Nicholls Junior College) was established in Thibodaux. It became a four-year college, independent of LSU, in 1956. Graduate degrees were first awarded in 1965 and the institution's name was changed to Nicholls State University in 1970.

After the conclusion of World War II, many individuals within the region strongly believed that South Central Louisiana needed a college. Long neglected by the Louisiana power structure and geographically isolated from the nearest population centers, Thibodaux and the region were much in need of an institution of higher learning, not only to provide expanded educational opportunities, but also to provide other educational services that would contribute to the economic development of the region. It is readily apparent that Nicholls has lived up to the promise that inspired its beginning.

The majority of faculty, staff, and students at Nicholls are happy to be associated with the University and have a positive regard for its mission and focus. More than one staff member remarked, "*Nicholls is like a family,*" though some bemoan what they term "*a loss of community feeling in recent years.*" Critical comments are rare and, with few exceptions, unwelcome. "*I would not want to live anywhere but here and I would not want to work anywhere but at Nicholls,*" is a common mantra. While the sense of Nicholls as a family is an essential dynamic of the institution, there is concern that such exclusiveness produces a climate that is resistant to change and future growth.

Nicholls' reputation as "*a good place to attend college*" (the words of an undergraduate student) has grown in recent years and Nicholls often now is the institution of choice for regional students rather than serving as their default option. This development reflects many different factors. First, and foremost, it mirrors a widely held public perception that educational quality at the University has grown significantly over the years. To wit, 94 percent of all academic programs eligible for accreditation nationally have earned that status, including staples such as business, education, and nursing. The University boasts 100 percent success among those programs for which accreditation has been mandated by the Board of Regents.

At the same time, Nicholls undergraduate students perform at high levels on national

certification examinations. In nursing, for example, the student rate of passage of the “board” examination consistently approaches 100 percent.

In recent years, NSU has placed increased emphasis upon supporting and serving its region. One sees this in the University’s commitment to economic development ventures, but also in its programmatic development. Several attractive new academic programs have been added recently, including a master’s degree in marine and environmental biology and a baccalaureate degree in culinary arts. Both programs speak to regional needs and are visible evidence of the close ties Nicholls has forged with the region. It should also be noted, however, that the master’s degree program in biology builds upon the strong reputation of Nicholls’ Department of Biological Sciences, which has been designated as a center of excellence in the specialized area of marine and environmental science.

The University’s enhanced reputation has been generated in part by the perception that it is well managed. Nicholls State University has consistently received excellent audit reports. The institution is considered to be, “*getting the most bang for its buck it possibly can,*” (the opinion of a regional elected official) having recruited “*a highly capable financial and managerial team*” (the opinion of a college president).

Nicholls also has contributed to its favorable reputation for sound management by declining to invest its funds in academic programs that would almost surely be marginal in quality at the institution because of its limited financial resources. For example, in concert with its own Board of Supervisors, Nicholls has not initiated doctoral programs and has limited the number of master’s programs to complement its unique areas of excellence.

NSU recently surpassed its “stretch goal” (\$15.75 million) for its capital campaign and is making progress in raising funds to construct a building to house its culinary arts program. The institution currently has five endowed faculty chairs and sixteen professorships that are funded. It is now in the midst of a \$5.5 million campaign to acquire funds to construct a building to house the University’s new Culinary Arts program.

The quality of the University’s student body has risen gradually over the past few years, at least as measured by the ACT scores of entering freshmen. Evidence of this is the increasing number of high school valedictorians who have chosen NSU. This number has risen from eleven in Fall 2001 to 26 in Fall 2002. Some very strong students (with ACT scores exceeding 30) are now choosing Nicholls. A significant reason for this is the emerging reputation of Nicholls for “*paying personal attention to me,*” according to a nontraditional woman undergraduate student. Faculty members at NSU are devoted pedagogues who “*place their students first,*” asserted an experienced and enthusiastic member of the faculty. The University’s frequently cited motto, “Excellence in Education with a Personal Touch,” is more than a hollow phrase for most NSU personnel.

An important cog in this machine of progress, according to a cross-section of individuals who were interviewed, has been Dr. Donald J. Ayo, who will retire in June 2003 after two decades as President of the University. According to a faculty member, *“He’s a politically smart guy, who has not been easily discouraged.”* Dr. Ayo’s leadership has been *“determined,” “dedicated,” “innovative,”* and *“tenacious,”* according to community and campus observers. Dr. Ayo’s service to the University and to the people of the Bayou country has been a tremendous asset. However, the future now calls for another tested leader who must navigate the University through new and different challenges in a rapidly changing society. Among the more important challenges are:

(1) The Board of Supervisors must recruit and appoint a visionary, energetic, and experienced President. This individual must be someone who simultaneously can unite the campus, serve the region, make difficult choices and move the campus toward realistic new goals and targets. He/she must be personable, flexible, and a good listener, but be strong, transformational, and *“able to take the heat.”* There is a very strong consensus on campus that, *“The Board must not make a political choice”* for president but instead *“must choose the best person.”* A less resounding group, but still a majority, prefers an “outside” president *“who will be a breath of fresh air”* and *“open us to new ways of thinking about our problems,”* all within the context of understanding and respecting the region’s distinct culture. There is little doubt that Nicholls State University, the Cajun region, and the State of Louisiana represent cultures that are highly distinctive in a national context. The next President must understand and respect these qualities, while at the same time advancing the University toward excitingly new, but not antagonistic, possibilities and goals. A regional political leader summarized the University’s situation rather well when he observed that, *“If the Board appoints the right person, everyone in the region will benefit as a result; if it makes a poor choice, it will be a disaster and Nicholls and this region will be negatively affected because there are so many important decisions on the horizon.”*

Several potentially harmful developments could impact future student enrollment at Nicholls. In 2005, the University will move away from its historic open admissions framework to a more selective admissions policy. If there are no proactive interventions, this could cost the institution up to one-third of its entering freshman class. According to Noel-Levitz, the nationally acclaimed consultation firm contracted by the Board of Regents to assist all campuses in developing enrollment management solutions, Nicholls State has not yet begun to sufficiently prepare for the implementation of the 2005 selective admissions.

Also affecting student enrollment will be the opening of a community college in nearby Houma, Louisiana representing an expansion of the existing technical college. It is likely that many students will begin their college education there and may matriculate into Nicholls by either their sophomore or junior years. Clearly, the University must partner with this community college and

establish articulation agreements so students can move easily to Nicholls from the community college. Adding to the existing pressures of enrollment issues are statistics from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) that show the number of high school graduates in Louisiana declining by 12% in the next decade. This implies that there will likely be fewer prospective traditional, first-time freshmen available to recruit. Hence, **(2) Nicholls must strengthen its partnership with local schools even more to improve student achievement, thoughtfully consider proactive measures offered by Noel-Levitz to better prepare for the 2005 selective admissions, and establish articulation agreements with the community college for easy student matriculation into Nicholls.**

Since the higher education funding formula is primarily driven by student credit hours, Nicholls is quite likely to face a set of budget issues that may require a down-sizing of its programs. **(3) The new President must inform the campus of such budgetary constraints and initiate a campus-wide discussion and strategic plan. He/she should not be afraid to seek outside counsel in addition to tapping the best thoughts of those on the campus or in the region. (4) The Board of Supervisors must be prepared to support the new President who will be facing new and different challenges and out of necessity, may have no alternative but to review and eliminate or down-size programs. Further, (5) Board members and the System Presidents should be in conversation with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Higher Education about the most cost efficient profile of Nicholls' student body and about how to provide the University with proper incentives to help them get there.**

Secular changes in the Louisiana economy (especially in sugar cane and related agriculture, but also in oil and gas) may usher in a period of regional economic decline (and a resulting departure of residents) unless counteracted. **(6) The new President and the University must commit themselves to leading the economic development of the region. Public service in the form of participation in regional economic development activities must be accorded a position of honor and faculty, staff and students must be encouraged to find new ways to tie their efforts to the region's economy.** No institution has more ability to transform the regional economic landscape than Nicholls State University. Even so, that potential has only begun to be tapped.

The funding of intercollegiate athletics continues to be a challenge at Nicholls. In this fiscal year, NSU has utilized more than \$2.1 million of its general fund budget to support its intercollegiate athletic programs. Whatever one thinks of these programs, this is a large proportion of Nicholls' general fund budget (approximately five percent of the institutional Educational and General budget)

and represents funds that could be used for other purposes ranging from the purchase of journals in the Ellender Library to faculty salaries. Even the most fervent supporters of NSU intercollegiate athletic programs acknowledge that “*It’s a huge struggle simply to maintain what we have, much less improve our programs.*” Nicholls is hardly the only Louisiana public university to face this dilemma. Those who understand the complexity of the situation believe that Nicholls cannot truly improve its financial situation in intercollegiate athletics without the participation and cooperation of its sister Louisiana institutions (nearly all of whom face similar pressures). **(7) We recommend that the Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors mandate an intensive examination of intercollegiate athletic programs and their funding, and their expenditures at all Louisiana institutions. The new President, in cooperation with the Board of Regents and the Board of Supervisors, must ensure a public appreciation of the cost and benefits of intercollegiate athletics.**

A related problem is the perception of many, on- and off-campus, that the University “*is trying to do too much*” and that it is “*over committed.*” While most of Nicholls’ activities are legitimate and even necessary for a comprehensive regional university, the new emphasis by the Board of Supervisors on performance funding and the strong belief that regional universities cannot be all things to all people, must be an important guidepost for the next President. Again, as recommended earlier, the new President must set in motion a thorough campus-wide review of all programs with an eye toward streamlining and emphasizing its unique areas of excellence. No one believes this process will be easy, but it is a necessary step in Nicholls’ evolution. Nicholls may become smaller, but it will become better and even stronger.

Related to each of the previous issues is the relative absence on the Nicholls campus of comprehensive, useful long-range planning documents. True, Nicholls has on file the *Nicholls State University Strategic Plan 2001*. However, this plan represents a “wish list” on the part of various campus constituencies and does not deal directly with the institution’s most critical challenges, to wit, the prospective decline in enrollment in 2005, the funding of intercollegiate athletics, and the potential necessary down-sizing of programs. Nor does the *Strategic Plan 2001* establish any time-lines for the attainment of goals, or detail who on the campus is responsible for attaining those goals, or provide even an estimate of the cost of actions required. These inadequacies are so substantial that the existing Plan is virtually useless.

Further, in vital areas of the institution (e.g. information technology), no established long-term plan of action exists and the University appears to behave in an *ad hoc* fashion. **(8) The new President must develop a viable Strategic Plan that: outlines specific goals, benchmarks and timelines; delineates the costs associated with those goals; and identifies individuals responsible for meeting those goals. The development of this new Plan should involve the entire University**

community. The President should consider hiring a professional facilitator to accomplish this important process and be prepared to use the strategic plan as a roadmap for action.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The University is organized academically around four colleges, the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, a Junior Division and a host of other centers and programs that report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. According to the NSU Organization Chart, no less than 15 individuals have been assigned to report directly to the institution's able Vice President for Academic Affairs. By any standard, this is too many. **(9) The University should take steps to cut this number at least in half by allocating some of these reportages to the college deans and others to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs or other administrators in the unit.**

Currently, the University offers 59 active degree programs. A dozen of these programs are at the associate level. At the graduate level, it offers 11 active programs of study. Nicholls offers one education specialist degree program in the area of school psychology. The range of Nicholls' degree offerings is not unusual for an institution of this size, although it may well be excessive given the institution's funding and the onset of a community college.

General Education

Nicholls State University's general education program that all students must complete in order to earn their baccalaureate degree is adequate. Its size (42 semester hours) is typical and the program contains several provisions that are praiseworthy. Nine semester hours of writing and composition are required. This is a vitally important requirement that many other campuses should emulate. In addition, students must demonstrate oral communication skills. The program's computer literacy requirement is also laudable, although it could more clearly delineate exactly what the University constitutes as being "computer literate." No agreement exists on the campus on this subject. Our conversations with departments suggest that there is tremendous variance in what individual departments term as "computer literacy." Of course, it is to be expected that the disciplinary material and examples used as a part of computer literacy education will vary significantly from department to department. Nonetheless, there does not appear to be any consensus on whether student ability to use word processing and spreadsheet programs should be a mandatory part of computer literacy (true of virtually all other campuses that have computer literacy requirements), or whether an understanding of societal, social and ethical issues relating to information technology should be included. **(10) We recommend that the new President commission a re-examination of the issue of computer literacy as a part of general education in an effort to more clearly define what constitutes a computer literate student.**

The general education program lacks required coursework in two important areas: international and non-Western studies, and gender/race/ethnic studies. Nicholls students will graduate into a world

that is increasingly international, multi-ethnic, and diverse. It is important that their undergraduate educations contain at least some elements that require them to deepen their knowledge and appreciation for cultures and historical traditions that are distinctly different from their own. **(11) Every student should be required to study international and/or non-Western culture and history. Further, each student should be prepared and knowledgeable of issues relating to gender, race, or ethnic concerns.** This should not be confused with a requirement that a certain doctrinaire point of view be taught. Instead, the focus should be upon stimulating students to view issues from different vantage points and to encourage them to place themselves, intellectually speaking, in someone else's shoes. It is possible these requirements can be accomplished without any increase in the size of the general education requirement. This could be accomplished by specifying certain courses of study throughout the existing program that would fulfill these sub-requirements.

Finally, not only does Nicholls not require each student to acquire knowledge of a foreign language, but also it appears that the University is backing away from foreign language instruction overall. **(12) Every bachelor's degree recipient should be required to demonstrate at least minimal facility in a foreign language.** Language is the primary repository of a culture. One learns best to understand another culture and its intricacies by acquiring some proficiency with that culture's language. For example, Spanish already is the second language of the United States and is the first language in certain parts of the country; French is part of the cultural landscape of Nicholls. Many Nicholls students will find that if they wish to compete in such a world and maximize their opportunities, they must have passable knowledge of a foreign language. Given the unique and beautiful French Cajun heritage of many students, it would be admirable to include French with an emphasis and understanding of its use and heritage of Cajun culture. No doubt it might take Nicholls some years to adjust its general education program to introduce a foreign language requirement; however, it should do so, for this is a fundamental issue of academic quality. It also is necessary if the University is to prepare educated, humane individuals who will be capable of understanding the world in which they live and be able to prosper in it.

The Library

The Allen J. Ellender Memorial Library is described in the Nicholls State University *Catalog* as an "imposing structure," and indeed it is. It is a large facility that contains 400,000 bound volumes and approximately 3,000 journals, though that number has decreased in recent years and may no longer be current.

The major problem facing the library is not facilities, but budget. In 2000-2001, the University's total expenditures for the library were \$1.522 million, down from \$1.627 million the year prior. Library expenditures as a percent of total educational and general expenditures have fallen to 4.07 percent, down from 4.87 percent in 1997-1998. According to library personnel, the library

acquisition budget now is only about \$400,000, making it very difficult for it to keep pace with expanding knowledge. Annually, the library has had to make difficult choices between library materials and personnel. In the words of one library professional, *“It’s not clear that we now satisfy even the minimal standards of the ALA.”*

We do not have an immediate solution for this situation, which once again relates to funding. Clearly, one partial solution is the sharing of materials with other libraries, while another is the use of electronic library materials. Even so, neither of these is a money-saver, if the experience of other libraries is relevant. Both cost money, though both probably are less expensive than the alternatives. **(13) We urge the Board of Supervisors to mandate increased sharing of library materials among its institutions, increased use of electronic materials, and joint purchasing.** All of these already are occurring to some extent, but all represent the future in terms of library services. Hence, cooperative, technology-based behavior should be the common practice of the University.

Finally, in a section below, we discuss the possibility that additional, targeted student fees might be assessed successfully if students and their families approve of the use of the fee monies and are able to see clearly that the funds are being used for this purpose. The student technology fee provides an excellent example. **(14) We believe the new President should explore having students consider the approval of student fees to be used to enhance library materials at the Allen J. Ellender Memorial Library. This will require a clear explication of the need for more and current library holdings, an explicit connection to academic quality, and (most importantly) a demonstration of the improved manner in which students will be served.** This appears to be the best hope for the library over the next few years.

Review of Academic Programs

A recurring theme throughout this Review is the need for Nicholls to diminish the scope of its programs and activities. Every year, prices rise, but there are no adjustments in operating budgets or library allocations. Thus, each program can purchase just a little bit less each year and the vintage of equipment becomes just a little older. The institution’s records reveal that it has terminated several academic programs over the past decade, though comparatively few in the very recent past. Such activity must now be renewed and accelerated. **The new President should initiate action in this direction soon after his/her arrival on campus (See Recommendation 4).** In a section above, we suggest a process for doing so.

It is an easy task for us to point out that Nicholls must eliminate some programs and activities to simply maintain existing levels of quality. It is quite another to discuss such changes within the context of shared governance, to make very difficult decisions, and then to implement them. Nevertheless, it is essential that Nicholls narrow the scope of its activities and free up resources for

reallocation to the programs and activities that remain. We suggest several possibilities (for positive reallocations) throughout this Review. It will not be difficult to spend any dividend created by termination actions. Producing that dividend will be a most difficult task and will directly challenge the new President and will require the support of the Board.

A major concern to the new President should be those programs that are preparing students for employment in areas of critical shortages. Teacher education and nursing are most obvious at this time. The College of Education has undergone a recent review by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and has been accredited with probation. **(15) The new President must provide the appropriate resources/services to ensure that the College of Education is able to attain full NCATE accreditation status.**

IV. FACULTY

In 2001-2002, Nicholls employed 275 full-time faculty members. As a group, they are dedicated and inspirational in their approach to their work. *“It’s interesting,”* said a junior faculty member, *“how many faculty in my department behave almost as if they have some kind of religious calling to what they are doing.”* Students remarked frequently that faculty give them extra time and help outside of their classes. *“I came to Nicholls because of its reputation for small classes and faculty who care and that’s the way it’s been,”* commented a student who transferred into the institution as a second semester sophomore and is now ready to graduate later this spring.

The Nicholls faculty is more than 89 percent Caucasian, making this group less diverse than its student body. In 2001-2002, only five percent of all faculty were African-American and approximately four percent Asian or Asian-American. An even smaller percentage is representative of other minority groups. **(16) The new President should take steps to diversify the Nicholls faculty, given that any individual appointed must satisfy rigorous professional and academic standards.** The male to female faculty ratio is nearly balanced at 52 percent versus 48, respectively.

While faculty are lauded for their academic practices, only 52 percent of Nicholls faculty have earned the appropriate terminal degree in their academic discipline. This is not a particularly high percentage although the use of good adjunct faculty is cost effective and many outstanding faculty come from such ranks. **(17) Nonetheless, the new President should encourage department chairs and deans to attempt to appoint more full-time faculty with appropriate terminal degrees.**

One measure of the good work of Nicholls faculty members comes in the form of the evaluations they receive on the annual ACT student satisfaction surveys. Another way to measure faculty pedagogical knowledge and skills is the performance of NSU students on national certification examinations. Whatever the student attrition and selection that proceeds these examinations, they are ready evidence that many very good things are happening in classrooms, laboratories, internships and placements at Nicholls.

Faculty Salaries, Hiring, and the Need to Spread the Nets Broadly

Faculty salaries have moved upward in Nicholls’ recent history. According to data supplied by the University, over the past three years, the average faculty salary at NSU has increased by a bit more than four percent per year.

The most recent comparable SREB faculty salary data are available for the 2001-2002 academic year. The table below summarizes Nicholls’ standing. It is apparent that Nicholls’ salaries tend toward the bottom end of the Louisiana public, four-year faculty salary distribution in Louisiana.

At the full professor rank, however, Nicholls ranks third among the seven institutions in the Four-Year 4 and 5 categories, and is at 99% of the SREB. In the “all ranks” category, the institution ranks sixth among this same group. Some of the differential may relate to the faculty disciplines dominant at each institution and the market for the faculty, but it seems unlikely that such differences account for the entire gap. Hence, even though Nicholls obviously has made real salary progress in recent years, much more remains to be done. **(18) We urge the Board of Supervisors, the Board of Regents, the Legislature and the Governor to continue to support more competitive salaries for faculty at Nicholls in order for the institution to be positioned to recruit and retain highly qualified faculty.**

**Louisiana Average Faculty Salaries
Compared to the SREB by Category
2001-02**

SREB Category	Institution	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructor	All Ranks
Four-Year 1	LSU A&M	\$82,277	\$59,055	\$53,601	\$34,518	\$59,028
	SREB	\$89,136	\$62,814	\$53,599	\$35,874	\$68,040
Four-Year 2	ULL	\$73,432	\$57,013	\$44,391	\$34,376	\$53,819
	UNO	\$73,487	\$53,161	\$49,900	\$31,541	\$57,618
	SREB	\$83,593	\$61,376	\$51,073	\$36,179	\$62,402
Four-Year 3	LTU	\$65,470	\$55,716	\$47,606	\$29,369	\$52,174
	SU A&M	\$64,122	\$52,839	\$43,974	\$33,146	\$50,059
	ULM	\$61,288	\$51,047	\$44,087	\$30,522	\$46,554
	SREB	\$67,349	\$55,392	\$46,020	\$35,056	\$52,419
Four-Year 4	GSU	\$58,671	\$51,577	\$42,569	\$32,157	\$46,558
	MSU	\$59,377	\$47,240	\$39,001	\$33,932	\$46,751
	NSU	\$60,315	\$48,910	\$41,738	\$31,192	\$42,471
	SLU	\$62,010	\$51,868	\$43,513	\$33,925	\$45,016
	SREB	\$65,498	\$53,611	\$45,351	\$35,514	\$50,675
Four-Year 5	LSUS	\$56,291	\$49,526	\$41,274	\$31,993	\$47,749
	NiSU	\$60,118	\$49,241	\$41,915	\$30,637	\$43,524
	SUNO	\$57,672	\$49,898	\$41,925	\$32,102	\$44,886
	SREB	\$60,578	\$51,215	\$42,812	\$33,553	\$45,978
NiSU Salary Factor		99%	96%	98%	91%	96%

Source of Data: IPEDS Salaries & SREB Data Exchange

One consequence of the University's salary problems is that it often has been pushed to seek faculty regionally or even locally. The end result is that it has appointed many Nicholls graduates to its faculty. There are both pros and cons to this type of action. It is wonderful to be able to appoint loyal, highly committed faculty, and most alumni of the institution are precisely that. On the other hand, Nicholls and other public institutions in Louisiana often are in need of individuals with broader, more cosmopolitan experience and a more diverse range of contacts. A perusal of the Nicholls *2002-2003 Bulletin* (catalog) reveals a high percentage of individuals who have earned a Nicholls degree and

a rather high percentage of individuals who have earned their graduate degree from Louisiana State University. **(19) The University would be well advised to minimize in-bred and localized hiring practices in the future and instead diversify the degree sources of its new faculty. Just as it deliberately attempts to recruit and appoint African-American and other faculty, it should deliberately attempt to recruit and appoint faculty who have earned their degrees in other regions of the United States.** Diversity is not just an ethnic or racial concept. More diverse hiring can prove to have fruitful outcomes, as Nicholls will gain divergent and stimulating perspectives, new contacts and new approaches to its problems and challenges.

The New Common Form for Faculty Evaluation

We are hesitant to critically remark about the new Common Form for faculty evaluation, given the hundreds of hours that have been spent producing it. However, we must report that many faculty members, especially in the sciences and professional areas, do not feel the Common Form fits their needs. Also, we concur with the skeptical view of a department head that, *“This is going to take lots of hours of valuable time to complete and I don’t think we’ll be any better off after we’ve done so.”* The new form and procedures seem to value process above substance and to submerge faculty in paper. **(20) We recommend that the new President study the Common Form for Faculty Evaluation carefully prior to approving it for implementation.** Based upon our experience at many other institutions, we are confident that there may be better means of evaluating the effectiveness of faculty - - one of which is consideration of student performance.

The Need for a Policy with Teeth for the Evaluation of Tenured Faculty

The tenured faculty evaluation policy should provide for a process anchored on peer evaluations, providing faculty the opportunity to improve in response to ongoing professional development, appropriate warnings and notices, and (ultimately) specific sanctions for failure to comply including the possibility of penalties, suspension, or termination. Termination must come only as the result of action taken by the Board of Supervisors, based upon a recommendation from the President. It should be possible for either a department head, or a dean or vice president, to initiate proceedings against a faculty member. Faculty members should have the opportunity to present their own case and to appeal to appropriate campus panels, but always with the understanding that these panels are recommendatory to the President. Nonetheless, faculty should not have the ability to ignore proceedings or to simply refuse to cooperate with an improvement plan jointly devised by themselves, their colleagues and administrators.

In essence, Nicholls has no real policy that enables it to evaluate, improve, discipline as necessary, and even terminate tenured faculty who perform below expectations. **(21) Using guidelines and deadlines supplied by the new President, and in accordance with the new UL System PPM entitled REVIEW OF FACULTY RANKS (effective January 10, 2003), Nicholls faculty members should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate that they are capable of effectively evaluating their own ranks, particularly those holding tenure status.** If Nicholls implements a meaningful policy for the evaluation of tenured faculty, it will gain greater credibility with the public and legislators, who believe that tenure sometimes has functioned (inappropriately) as a refuge for the incompetent rather than as a defense for academic freedom. Such a policy implementation will also constitute a powerful statement about the commitment of Nicholls faculty to academic excellence. The new President should move to ensure this occurs by providing policy guidelines and deadlines for campus action.

V. STUDENTS

Nicholls State's Fall 2002 headcount enrollment was 7,332, a 1.7 percent increase over the previous year, but slightly less than in 1999. While headcount enrollment has been comparatively steady in the recent past, full-time equivalent enrollment is approximately three percent less than in the mid-1990s and about six percent less than in the late 1980s.

Approximately 64 percent of NSU's headcount enrollment is female; the national average is about 58 percent. Retention of students has always been a problem for the University; this appears to be particularly true for male students. In Fall 2001, approximately 40 percent of freshmen students were male, but only 33 percent of senior students were male. In general, the more experienced the students, the less likely they are to be males. This long-standing pattern should be a matter of concern and we **(22) recommend the new President commission a group of knowledgeable individuals to analyze why male students are gradually disappearing from Nicholls' campus.**

In contrast to many other universities nationally, it is indicated that the average age of Nicholls undergraduates has been declining slowly. The average student age in Fall, 2001 was 22.98, whereas in Fall 1998, it was 23.40 and 24.27 in Fall 1995. This is of interest because most campuses progressively have enrolled more and more nontraditional, often older part-time students. Nicholls, however, gradually has increased its proportion of full-time, traditional students (who are younger). This may be a matter of deliberate University policy; on the other hand, it may reflect unconscious policies and attitudes that nontraditional, part-time students find disagreeable. **(23) The new President should investigate this apparent anomaly. Nicholls cannot afford to "turn off" any significant segment of prospective students.**

Nicholls is diverse in terms of the ethnic background of its students, however to no significant exception; approximately 79 percent of all students were Caucasian in Fall 2001. However, the University's enrollment of minority students grew from 14 percent in Fall 1992 to 21 percent in Fall 2001. African-Americans easily constitute the largest minority group at the institution, accounting for 16 percent of the headcount enrollment in Fall 2001 (up from 11 percent in Fall 1992). However, we note that the number of Asian-American students at

Nicholls fell from 109 in Fall 1999 to only 50 in Fall 2001.

African-American students typically report that the racial climate and their comfort with Nicholls “*are OK*”. No African-American student to whom we talked indicated that he/she had been subjected to blatant racist behavior or taunts, but several reported minor incidents, or their perception of a lack of significant inclusion of African-Americans in campus activities. It is notable, however, that several recent leaders of the student body have been African-Americans.

(24) This 54 percent decline in Asian student enrollment requires investigation and analysis by the institution. The new President should also examine the perception by African Americans indicated above and give special focus to the lower than average retention rates of African American students.

Most members of the Nicholls student body commute to the institution and approximately 81 percent attend full-time. Slightly more than three percent of students are from out-of-state. A surprisingly small proportion of the student body (less than three percent according to the ACT survey) attended a two-year institution prior to coming to Nicholls. Approximately 61 percent of Nicholls receive some form of financial aid. Most are first generation college students.

Many Nicholls students do not come to the campus prepared to do college-level work in fundamental disciplines such as English and mathematics. In Fall 2001, 53 percent of first-time freshmen required one or more developmental (essentially pre-college) courses. This is down from more than 66 percent in 1994, but the numbers are not strictly comparable because of changing University and state standards concerning developmental courses. Forty-four (44) percent of freshmen required remedial work in mathematics, while 27 percent required remedial work in English.

The mean ACT score of Nicholls freshmen has trended upward (slowly) over the past ten years. In 1991, the mean ACT score of NSU freshmen was 18.6; it was approximately 19.5 in 2002. However, this gain is somewhat deceptive, as the percent of NSU freshmen with ACT scores 15 or below (the national average being 20) was 15.2 percent in 1991 and 14.5 percent in

2001. This does not represent a large change.

At the other end of the spectrum, in 1991, 4.1 percent of all freshmen boasted an ACT score of 26 or above, and this number rose to 4.9 percent in 2001. Thus, in empirical terms, the academic preparation of the Nicholls undergraduate student body appears to have changed slightly over the past decade.

Nicholls proudly reports that the overall rating given to the institution on the ACT satisfaction survey is the highest in Louisiana. This is commendable. Left unstated, however, is the fact that Nicholls' rating is below the national average. A thorough analysis of the rationale for state and national differences is beyond the scope of this report. Nonetheless, we note that the following Nicholls services received student satisfaction ratings considerably below national averages:

- residence halls
- the orientation program
- day care services
- athletic facilities
- the campus bookstore
- billing and fee payment procedures

Services that were rated at or above national averages included:

- Library facilities and services
- Student health services
- Student employment services
- Food services
- Personal security at the campus
- Attitude of the non-teaching staff toward students

(25) The new President would be well advised to focus attention on those areas rated below national averages in particular as a part of a general analysis of the University's operations and services when he/she arrives on campus.

Many Nicholls students are very pleased with the University and the education they are receiving. *"I didn't want to attend a really large school,"* a representative undergraduate student commented, *"and Nicholls has been just right for me. I get lots of attention and have loads of opportunities to get involved."* Another student expressed that *"Faculty and staff always seem to be willing to spend extra time with me, even after their regular hours and sometimes even on*

weekends.” Still another student spoke for many when she gratefully observed that, “There are some really amazing teachers at Nicholls---people who just seem to know how to explain their subjects and get us interested.”

It is not an accident, then, that Nicholls students are satisfied with their university. Nicholls has developed what one staff member has labeled “a helper culture” over the years and students sense this on a daily basis.

The TOPS Program and Non-Resident Fee Waivers

The State of Louisiana, in an attempt to increase the flow of its citizens into higher education and retain them within the state, has developed a generous tuition opportunity program for state residents. Briefly, students who have successfully taken a set of “core” courses in high school (for example, four years of English), have earned at least a 2.0 grade point average in those courses, and who have scored a minimum of 20 on the ACT, have their tuition paid for them by the state at public institutions. If the student attends an independent institution within the state, then he/she will receive the public institution equivalent tuition to apply toward the tuition of the independent institution.

This is a powerful and generous program. In recent years, Nicholls has increased the share of its undergraduate student body that is supported by the TOPS program to almost 40 percent. That is a very positive development. However, a close examination of the data reveals that the preponderance of Nicholls students taking advantage of the TOPS program have ACT scores in the 20-22 range. The University generally has not attracted many TOPS students with higher ACT scores. Those students appear to be selecting other institutions, for example, Louisiana State University. **(26) We believe the University must examine the ways and means by which it might fare better recruiting academically talented students (with ACT scores above 22) who reside in and outside of South Central Louisiana. Current University efforts in this regard remain modest and must be upgraded. The institution’s honors and study abroad programs, a set of more attractive on-campus activities, more competitive scholarship aid targeted at high ability students, improved residence hall facilities and more vigorous recruiting all might be part of an institutional action package in this arena.** If the University truly believes it has an outstanding product to offer, then it must publicize that fact to prospective students throughout the state.

Connected to this, the Board of Supervisors also has developed an attractive program that

permits Nicholls and other institutions to offer out-of-state tuition waivers to talented out-of-state students. Students who have completed the appropriate core courses in high school, who have scored 21 or higher on the ACT, have a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.25, and have no need for remedial work are eligible for the award, which allows them to pay in-state tuition. Currently, international students are not eligible for this tuition remission opportunity.

Nicholls' Thibodaux location, substantially removed from the state's borders, means that it does not acquire out-of-state students as easily as other public institutions located closer to other states (Grambling State University and the McNeese State University provide examples). Therefore, it will be necessary for Nicholls to do more to advertise its campus and its programs in order to gain the attention of out-state-students. **(27) A relatively low cost way to start is to utilize out-of-state alumni to help advertise the institution in other states. The tuition waiver should be marketed as a "President's Scholarship," or "Dean's Scholarship," or given an equivalent prestigious name.** This is yet another example of how Nicholls must adjust its gaze beyond South Central Louisiana if it is to retain institutional viability after 2005.

(28) Further, Nicholls should petition its Board to permit it to offer a limited number of waivers to international students. Nicholls has a history of success in enrolling students from Central America and it seems likely that such relationships could be renewed if remissions are available. In order to gain support, Nicholls might specify that such remissions (based of course on strong academic credentials) be limited to no more than three percent of the student body (about 220 students currently). It should also underscore to the Board of Supervisors and others that this is a vital part of a set of initiatives that will help the institution deal with the prospect of otherwise devastating enrollment declines in 2005 and thereafter.

Student Retention

Over the past four years, the annual attrition of freshmen students has ranged from a low of 42.3 percent in 2000 to a high of 45.1 percent in 2002. Both the level and the trend of this variable should be of concern to the University. The absolute level of attrition is higher than one observes in most AASCU institutions, but not unusual for a Louisiana institution. Without question, it reflects the characteristics of the University's students (i.e. academic preparation, financial background, etc.) and the institution's open admissions policy. However, the upward trend in attrition also is worrisome.

Clearly, Nicholls needs to improve its student retention. Higher admission standards will

positively impact retention. Other factors such as improved student advising, enhanced on-campus activities, improved residence halls, improved tutoring and academic assistance, and early intervention activities all must be a part of the University's strategies in this area. Every person on the campus must understand that he/she is a vital part of the institution's motto, "Excellence in Education With a Personal Touch." Each and every individual on the campus must serve students efficiently and in a caring fashion, while upholding the institution's rules, regulations and standards.

The financial mathematics associated with retention and attrition is indisputable. Assume Nicholls recruits 1,500 new freshman students each year. Based on 2002 figures, 676 of these students will not return for their sophomore year, leaving 824 who will enter their sophomore year. Next, assume that only 1,200 freshman students actually will register in 2005 because of higher admissions standards. It seems plausible that this group of students will exhibit a higher rate of retention. Suppose the University is able to cut its attrition rate in half (improve its retention) because it has enrolled a more talented group of students and because of other improved retention activities. This means that only 270 students will depart between their freshman and sophomore years, leaving 930 to enter their sophomore year. The University actually can end up with more sophomore students (930 versus 824) if it finds the ways and means to cut in half its rate of attrition. Then, if the usual proportions of these students continue into their junior and senior years, Nicholls will have totally canceled the impact of increased admissions standards on its headcount enrollment.

The moral attached to this simple financial modeling story is clear. If Nicholls can improve its student retention, then it can avert some considerable proportion (perhaps all) of the adverse enrollment and financial impact of higher admissions standards in 2005. This must be one of the institution's highest priorities in the next few years and should be accorded the highest attention by the new President. **(29) The new President would, therefore, be well advised to have the institution take a fresh look at what it is doing, and not doing, in the realm of student retention activities.**

VI. BUDGET AND FINANCE

The overriding fact of fiscal life for Nicholls State University is simple: it does not have a great deal of money to spend. Nicholls receives the lion's share (57.1%) of its resources from direct appropriations of the State of Louisiana. A smaller (36.5%) but not insignificant amount rises from student tuition and fees. Both of the sources have serious constraints upon them. Louisiana has many demands for its funds. Higher education, while supported by the governor and members of the Legislature, is but one of the competing claims for scarce resources. Nicholls, like other institutions of higher education in Louisiana, receives its state funding based upon the higher education funding formula, which is still primarily student credit-hour driven, but in recent years has a focus on performance funding. The statewide average for formula funding is 79% and Nicholls is funded at 69% of the formula. The bottom line is that Nicholls always must manage its money carefully in order to meet widely accepted higher education standards such as maintaining professional academic accreditations. This circumstance is aggravated by the rather large budgetary commitment Nicholls and other Louisiana institutions make to intercollegiate athletics.

While Nicholls has a sound balance sheet, it is not without financial challenges. Any institution with a capitalization as thinly spread as Nicholls needs a financial plan to cope with unexpected shortfalls in either appropriations or tuition. As we have pointed out, the decision to raise the admissions bar has real financial implications. If enrollments decline in the short run, revenues are in jeopardy. Without a viable Strategic Plan for adjusting to these changes, belt-tightening decisions are likely to be uniform across the expenditure categories rather than targeted to preserve the best. Strong and important programs suffer while non-productive ones grow weaker, but do not go away.

Coincidentally, tuition and fees are reasonable in light of the limited financial capacity of South Louisiana students and their families, and they are not high in a national context. We believe that Nicholls has some potential to increase tuition and fees, provided the increases are targeted for specific, identifiable purposes that students and their families can understand and support. In our view, the targeted information technology fee that students approved provides such an example. **(30) The new President should explore the possibility of a very limited number of additional, targeted fees and should include students in those discussions from the very beginning. Students and their families must understand the quality implications of the fees and have confidence that the funds generated by such fees will be used only for the purposes designated.** Fairness suggests an annual report to the students to show how their

fee dollars were spent. One student articulated, *“I’ll pay more if I know what the money is being used for and I agree with the purpose. But, I am not going to agree with any old increase in our tuition.”* This may well be a majority view.

Given that the two principal revenue sources are constrained and that large blocks of new incremental dollars are unlikely, it follows that the next President will necessarily be forced to look within the institution for opportunities to consolidate, streamline, and rationalize programs in order to free up resources to undertake those initiatives that can have the most value to academic quality and economic development. The new President must act with a sense of urgency in fostering conversations that will move the institution in this direction.

Nicholls needs to find ways to provide more support for its academic and student programs. While one would hope that these resources would come from the State of Louisiana, that source cannot be singular in order to meet all the needs. Expenditure reduction through program consolidation can produce funds to meet the cost of new initiatives. **Academic program review is a necessary exercise at Nicholls (See Recommendation 4).** While programs at Nicholls are often reviewed for accreditation purposes, they are rarely examined to determine their continued need in light of changing interests and opportunities. Program review can produce a host of positive outcomes, the principal one being that those programs which have served the purpose for which they were created or which never developed a sufficient enrollment base can be eliminated and or consolidated and those “freed” up resources applied where the need is the greatest.

Nicholls has a strong balance sheet although its resources are limited. Careful and conservative management with a commitment to solvency is apparent in the institutional balance sheet. Currently, Nicholls has no long-term debt. Its reserves, although below the level that it should obtain, are slowly increasing. **(31) It is plausible for the University to consider incurring some long-term debt in order to accomplish specific future objectives.** In our view, the highest two claims on these resources should be enhancement of academic facilities and equipment and improvement of student life.

Nicholls’ auxiliary services are comprehensive and reasonably well designed to serve the needs of a student population that is essentially commuter in nature (only 15 percent live on campus in residence halls). We applaud the University’s move to undertake a partnership with private entrepreneurs to construct new student housing. This should enable Nicholls to house

more students on campus, especially if it is able to renovate its existing empty residence hall. If not, the institution should consider razing this residence hall as soon as it is economically feasible.

The University is sensitive to student needs and most staff members appear to be quite diligent concerning their responsibility to provide high quality services. Staff members exhibit a healthy respect for students and have a genuine concern for their welfare. More than one observed, "*Students are our customers and we owe them the best we can give.*" Nicholls has been able to achieve a great deal with limited resources. The principal reason for that success is surely in large part due to the dedication of the staff members that view their roles as one of providing high quality service to "customers." That attitude bodes well for Nicholls' continued success as an institution that cares about its students and their achievements.

Other Potential Budget Implications

Several faculty members spoke of inhibiting and unnecessary procedures relating to grants. "*Some faculty are even reluctant to prepare grant proposals,*" declared a senior faculty member. **(32) Grant procedures should be reviewed with special attention to efficiency.**

The physical plant is attractive and generally well maintained. Although some University personnel assert that there is no deferred maintenance and while that is true within limited definitions, **(33) there are several buildings that need revitalization and re-fitting to provide more useful space and to be made suitable for applications that use 21st century technology. We believe the institution should develop a plan to do so.**

VII. TECHNOLOGY

Computing and nearly all information technology activities at Nicholls State University are divided into an administrative and an academic division. The administrative division is in charge of administrative computing, networking and all telecommunications. The academic division focuses on PC laboratories and faculty software and applications such as Blackboard. This division occurred in the mid-1990s in response to a COC/SACS recommendation. Based upon our observation and comments of users, it is a workable, though less than ideal, relationship on this campus. **(34) We are not prepared to recommend the reunification of the two computing arms at this time, but definitely feel the new President should examine that possibility as time permits.**

At the risk of being repetitive, we will state that lack of funding is the major problem faced by information technology on the Nicholls campus. There are pervasive shortages of hardware, software and personnel, except in areas that are financed by the student information technology fee. This fee, which is \$5 per credit hour up to a limit of \$60 per semester, has been tremendously beneficial for students and the campus. It has outfitted PC laboratories and supports their operation. As a consequence, these laboratories typically are up to date---in contrast to the machines and software utilized by many faculty and staff. It is somewhat paradoxical that faculty and staff frequently receive “hand me down” PCs from student laboratories that have upgraded their equipment. Said one middle level administrator, *“If I want to know what PC I’m going to have next, all I need to do is to go to a student lab and see what’s getting old.”*

At the very center of this problem is the fact that in recent years the University has never actually had an institutional equipment budget. Thus, there is no budget line as such to support the replacement of PCs in departments and offices or, for that matter, the upgrading, enhancement or replacement of information technology systems. Granted, some of the necessary funding often appears at the end of the fiscal year. An example in point is the funding provided for the upgrading of the University’s outdated PBX telephone system. At long last, Nicholls will mount a voice mail system. However, this approach to funding is soft and destroys any semblance of rational planning, whether the focus is on information technology or research equipment. **(35) In our view, an institutional equipment budget must be established to fund equipment purchases throughout the institution.**

(36) Additionally, Nicholls needs a comprehensive technology plan that contains objectives and measurements for judging accomplishments. Such a plan should include a

schedule for the acquisition and replacement of desktop computers and the identification of a standard office package. The plan also should identify applications that will receive support. A help desk or an informal group of users could then be established to assist new employees in becoming familiar with the systems.

There are numerous opportunities for Nicholls to accomplish more of its routine work through the expanded use of online technology. Applications for admission and employment, scheduling classes and registration for classes, bill payment and financial aid all lend themselves to online activity. Recognizing that resources are scarce, the plan should identify in priority order how these things will be accomplished. Savings can be significant.

(37) Without question, residence halls, classrooms and laboratories need high-speed access to the Internet. Currently, as one student resident put it, *“We dial up using our regular telephone line. Service is slow and the line can’t be used for anything else.”* Admittedly, this will be an expensive goal to achieve and perhaps the University should consider moving directly to wireless computing and Internet access. Nonetheless, developments such as these are an important part of a high quality education. Nicholls will be embraced as a low-tech university that is less attractive to students if it does not keep pace.

There is a need for the staff to be better equipped and trained in the use of a standard set of office products. **(38) An office suite should be made uniform throughout the campus and supported by the computing center with workshops, a help desk, and regular updates.** Regular electronic bulletins with "how to" screens should be emailed to all faculty and staff to provide up to date, relevant and new applications that may be undertaken using the software.

(39) Student labs should have the same set of office products that are available to the staff and students should be encouraged to make full use of them. Regular training opportunities should be made available to students.

VIII. ADMINISTRATION

Nicholls State University is organized conventionally with the four classic vice presidencies: Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, Student Affairs and Institutional Advancement. While the President does not appear to be overloaded, the Vice President for Academic Affairs appears to have substantially too many individuals reporting to her. The comments of individuals to whom we talked suggest that administrators are forced to minimize the time they spend with their reportees because they are stretched too thin. **(40) The Vice President for Academic Affairs should reorganize that office so that some of the individuals who now report to this administrator directly should report to other individuals.** We know of no theoretical or empirical evidence that suggests that administrators can effectively manage this many direct reports and still have time available for other critical ventures.

Operating procedures at Nicholls frequently seem to be based upon tradition. Perhaps this is what should be expected in an institution that has had only three Presidents in its 54-year history. While informal arrangements and tradition may work well for individuals with long tenure, these practices can be disadvantageous for those who are new to the institution, or those who move to another position within NSU. Moreover, relying on tradition rather than standard written procedures promotes resistance to change and stifles innovation and creativity. It also promotes the notion that “*insider relationships*” (the description of a department chair) are really what count. **(41) There is an urgent need for a comprehensive standard practice guide with sufficient specificity to ensure that procedures are uniformly established and their applications understood.**

(42) Further, Nicholls (and for that matter all the other institutions in the System) would be well served if the University of Louisiana System were to develop a System-wide set of financial and operational procedures and software that leave room for individual institutional innovation. For example, considerable cost savings could be realized through the use of System-wide software applications for accounting, budget and human resources. Considerable time and resources are devoted on each campus to the selection and implementation of applications that are common to each. A robust System-wide approach could reduce dramatically the current requirements for each campus to respond in its own peculiar way to needs that are uniform in nature.

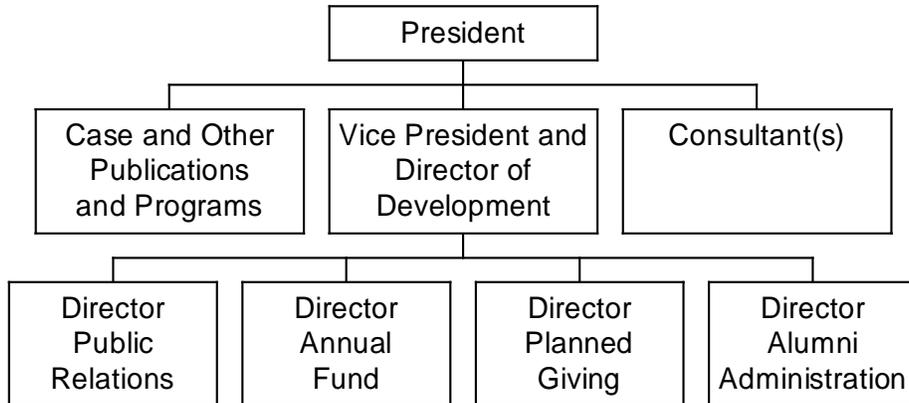
On the Nicholls campus, routine administrative tasks seem to be performed rather well.

Compared to many other campuses in Louisiana, we received relatively few complaints from faculty, students or staff concerning administrative efficiency. This is a compliment to all of those who supply such services. At times, some faculty members perceive that administrative personnel, particularly those in Business Affairs, are exceedingly policy and procedure driven. *“They always go by the book even when it doesn’t make sense,”* said a professor, who said she preferred a bit more flexibility. Nonetheless, a fair overall assessment of the quality and efficiency of administration at Nicholls is that it is satisfactory to excellent, depending on the service in question.

Finally, there is much disagreement on the campus with respect to the number of administrators and staff relative to faculty. The University trumpets the fact that it devotes a higher proportion of its budget to instruction and instructional support than most other institutions. And, the data demonstrate this. **(43) However defined and distributed, it does appear that the proportion of the budget devoted to administrative tasks may have edged upward recently. This is an area the new President must examine closely.** The University simply does not have sufficient resources to be able to afford excessive allocations to any area.

IX. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Assuming the enthusiastic support and participation of the governing board and especially a foundation board, a public institution can soar in the area of private support (institutional advancement). The reader should bear in mind that fund raising done well can work, regardless of the cause. Generally, the best approach to lower costs and impressive results in institutional advancement is as indicated in the table below.



CHARACTERISTICS OF OVERPRODUCTIVE FUND-RAISING PROGRAMS

1. Pay unusual attention to major gifts and planned giving
2. Separate corporate/foundation emphases
3. Telethons
4. Giving clubs and recognition programs
5. High number of names on mailing list
6. High number of solicitation calls

Source: *The President and Fund Raising*, by James L. Fisher/Gary H. Quehl.

The past five years at NSU have been a time of sustained growth for the advancement program. This is especially impressive in view of extremely limited resources and organizational and mission issues in the advancement area.

Since 1997, the University has had several significant accomplishments:

- An overall increase in the total University endowment to just under \$9 million.
- The University's first-ever capital campaign (with a goal of \$15.7 million goal) surpassed \$18.5 million in gifts and pledges.
- Five fully-endowed chairs (at least \$1 million each).
- The Kohler Foundation's gift (approximately \$2.7 million) of the Kenny Hill Sculpture Garden and Nicholls State University Folk Art Center.
- Gifts and grants totaling approximately \$1.7 million for the construction of the Ruth U. Fertel Culinary Arts Building.
- The Levert Land Company's gift of the Rienzi historical home and grounds, valued at \$1.5 million.
- Sixteen fully-endowed professorships (at least \$100,000 each). Four donors have made substantial payments to endow four additional professorships in the near future.
- A federal grant of \$650,000 for the Intergenerational Center.
- A federal grant of \$500,000 to assist the Center for the Study of Dyslexia.
- A \$380,000 grant from the Lorio Foundation.
- Gifts from Coca Cola, Hibernia National Bank, Sprint, and Terrebonne General Hospital totaling nearly \$450,000 to purchase an electronic marquee, three scoreboards, and a stadium sound system.
- Despite double digit endowment losses at most institutions nationally, the Nicholls State endowment has increased from \$4.9 million to \$8.7 million during the past four years.

According to one veteran legislator, "*President Ayo is the driving force behind the success of fund raising at Nicholls State University.*" That statement summarizes the institutional advancement effort at Nicholls and was echoed in many interviews with others including business leaders. We would add that the small but able development staff operating against a contrary tide also played an important role in orchestrating and facilitating the President's key role.

While "growing and maturing" in the capital grants and gifts area, the University is still grossly underdeveloped in the annual fund area. The University appears to have no consistent process for donor identification and long-term direct mail or telephone solicitation strategies are not well planned. Additionally, it appears that Nicholls fails to support a consistent volume of person-

to-person solicitation. The only ongoing strategy, it seems, is the annual membership mailing request from the Alumni Federation. Clearly, more needs to be done here and this should receive considerable attention by the vice president responsible for advancement.

With the exception of the major gifts/grants area, traditional indicators for this time period in most fund raising areas are unimpressive. Alumni participation has ranged from 4.6 to 8.1 percent over the past five years, far below comparative institutions and national averages. Despite a heavy concentration of alumni in Louisiana (23,784), there is no well-planned, systematic approach to alumni activities. There is also no formal, systematic annual fund campaign and no formal, systematic planned giving program. There exists no formal, systematic approach to records management or donor research. The University reports over 4,600 “lost” alumni, far above all averages for comparative institutions. Even though contributions from the Foundation Board of Directors were laudable in fiscal year 2002, the Board is far too small (six) when compared to regional and national peers.

Nonetheless, in face-to-face interviews with individuals and groups and in myriad written communications from key members of the community, the potential for strong support is evident. However, most state that the Office of Institutional Advancement has been inappropriately organized and staffed. Donors, professors, and staff echo one observer’s comment that, as a whole, the advancement staff is *“a group of really nice people, who love the place and have really good intentions...but most are not properly trained, not credentialed, they don’t see the ‘big picture,’ and as a result we’re not nearly producing the way we can.”*

An area business leader with long ties to Nicholls State stated *“I can’t remember the last time I was asked for a gift even though nearly everyone else in the world wants my money.”* He added, *“Nearly everything in the fund raising operation is in need of expansion. They need to upgrade the people, the processes, expectations, goals, printed materials, and, most importantly, overall accountability.”* **(44) It is clear that changes are required in research, organization, staffing, and programming to bring the University up to the standards of comparable universities.** Without such changes, the University will be unprepared to move forward with an aggressive fund-raising program.

“The Nicholls State University Foundation should include the corporate all-star team of executives from the area. The University should utilize their time wisely and motivate them to make Nicholls State a top priority,” stated a business leader. We agree with this assessment. **(45) Stated further, the new President must be a viable and forceful leader setting the priorities of the**

advancement effort. While the Foundation Board must be fully vested in the advancement program's overall objectives, its management should be the responsibility of the chief advancement officer under the President. **The President must exercise control over relationships with the media, contact with community leaders, especially those in the business community, and in the cultivation and solicitation of the institution's principal donors and donor prospects.**

There is no substitute for a President with a vision and passion," asserted a state official. (46) **The new President of Nicholls would be well advised to "get out and meet people." In addition to legislators, the new President should plan and conduct an early blitz of alumni chapters and other groupings of alumni around the region and beyond.**

(47) **Among others, the Foundation Board should open doors for the President. Implicit in extending ties to the community are at least three components - - namely, a relationship with the immediate community, business community, and ongoing contact with the press, especially the print and broadcast media in the "major" media markets that constitute the larger Nicholls State service area.** These contacts need to be extended throughout the community for the vice presidents and other leaders of the University as well, so that the community not only knows the Nicholls State leadership personally, but sees it as coherent and mutually supportive.

(48) **We recommend that the Foundation Board of Directors be expanded (16 to 18 members), re-energized, and educated on its responsibilities and agreeing in general on the strategic direction for the institution.** The Foundation Board should include individuals with substantive business experience, wealth, influence, and prominence. Foundation Board members should either be personally capable of supporting NSU financially or have the contacts and influence to convince others to do so. New members of the Foundation Board should include individuals with strong and obvious local connections and individuals with non-local, in-state "metropolitan" connections.

(49) **The Foundation Board should be committed to its chief executive officer, ensuring that the advancement program can tap its vast potential of material and moral support. New Board members must be recruited and trained to take responsibility for the fund-raising performance of the institution.** In addition to being too small, Foundation giving patterns have been inconsistent. The Foundation Board of Directors must play a direct role in fund-raising. The leadership of the Board should set the tone and a small committee of strong members should meet annually to evaluate and rate each member in terms of his/her ability to give. A solicitation amount

should be established and Board solicitors selected for each member to be approached.

**Foundation Board
Five Year Giving History**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>#Donors</u>	<u>Total Contributions</u>	<u>% Participation</u>
2001-02	6	\$ 363,975	100%
2000-01	4	\$ 4,650	100%
1999-00	4	\$ 25,400	100%
1998-99	4	\$ 8,000	100%
1997-98	4	\$ 54,000	100%
1996-97	4	\$ 604,000	100%

Source: Office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement

The lesson of “best advancement practice” across institutional types and in different cultures is threefold. **(50) First, a Foundation Board of Directors must assume a primary role in the advancement effort of the institution; it cannot be merely delegated to the staff no matter how pivotal a role they may play in the execution. Second, the Foundation Board, the President, the Vice President, and the professional(s) in charge of the basic functions of advancement—namely alumni relations, communications (typically incorporating public and government relations) and fund raising—must work as an integrated team, led and inspired by the President and effectively conducted by the Vice President for Advancement. Finally, the advancement officers must be broad-gauged and competent professionals who enjoy the respect of the academic and external community they exist to serve. The absence of any one of these characteristics will seriously weaken any institutional advancement program. Nicholls has been lacking in both resources and coordinated efforts.**

(51) The consultants recommend scheduling a two-day Foundation Board Retreat (led by an outside facilitator). Among the matters that need to be on the agenda for the Board Retreat are the following:

- a) The structure of the Foundation and policies for operation.
- b) The possible need for additional staff.
- c) Presentation and discussion of the NSU Strategic Plan.
- d) An analysis of the costs of achieving the Vision, with a time-line.
- e) An analysis of the endowment and fund-raising requirements for achieving the vision

on an annual and long-term basis.

- f) A determination of the role the Board members should play in resource generation.
- g) An analysis of the Board's abilities to assume that role and raise funds.
- h) The establishment of a statement of principles defining the precise expectations of all Board members, including and emphasizing fund raising.

Based on data provided by the University, fund raising at Nicholls is relatively expensive. Over the past six years, this has ranged from a low of 29 percent to a high of 55 percent of funds raised. These are very high fund raising cost levels, though the youthful nature of the program is probably the cause. The figures would be even higher if not for the major gifts program led by the President. In time, fund raising costs could be less than 10 cents on the dollar. *"I believe that with the right new President and an appropriately credentialed Vice President for Institutional Advancement, we will begin to more fully realize our tremendous potential in fund raising,"* reflected a Board member. He also added that *"I know people in our service area. With proper cultivation, the giving capacity will expand considerably."* A leader with long ties to NSU stated, *"Add some additional cultivation and support staff and an outward, warm, genuine development type president and fund raising will take off."*

(52) We recommend that the Vice President for Advancement also be titled Director of Development; that a new position, Director of Annual Giving, be created, perhaps reporting to a redirected Alumni Office; and that another professional be appointed to direct Planned Giving and Prospect Research. Under the existing arrangement, these positions, including the Alumni Director, should report to the current Assistant Vice President.

(53) We also recommend immediate attention to the software and database that are currently being utilized in the institutional advancement and alumni affairs areas. The University must upgrade software to contemporary standard and contract outside services to find "lost alumni." This will play a major role in the growth of annual fund results.

(54) We also believe the University would be well advised to engage outside professionals on an ongoing basis to evaluate its fund-raising activities and to counsel the institution on future courses of action. The University should move rapidly to improve its relationships with, and fund raising from, alumni and major corporate donors.

We note here that NSU has engaged Gargill Associates, a respected institutional advancement consulting firm. We are in substantive agreement with the Gargill recommendations.

Alumni Affairs

The University reports 27,568 alumni. However, 4,626 names on this list (17 percent) are “undeliverable”—an especially high ratio for an institution of moderate size with a relatively narrow geographic base. **(55) We recommend that steps be taken to improve the situation, probably by employing an outside firm to match alumni names and addresses.** The Alumni Federation claims an active membership of over 2,000 “paid” alumni. Unlike most institutions, the University does not report data to the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) making it impossible to make comparisons to peers. **(56) The University should begin to keep an all-inclusive comprehensive development report in CAE format for internal purposes. It should begin doing so immediately.** Membership funds generated by the Alumni Federation suggest a recent increase in alumni participation, but without an organized annual giving program it is impossible to appropriately assess alumni giving potential.

Unlike most colleges, Nicholls does not hold an annual spring phonathon. With the employment of a Director of Annual Giving, this should change immediately. **(57) Teams of 20 to 30 well-trained students should staff the phones for a four-month period seeking contributions for the annual fund.** Overall alumni participation should increase in the short term from 8 to 15 percent during the next two years. The long-range goal is 25 to 30 percent—equal to peer institutions—over five years.

The University reports a high number of alumni activities. By contemporary standard, these activities—while impressive for Nicholls State—do not reach the volume or quality of similar institutions. **(58) We recommend that the Office of Alumni Affairs be re-organized to place a stronger emphasis on alumni activities and fund raising. Alumni chapters should be initiated in areas where significant pockets of NSU alumni exist.** Alumni can provide critical financial support, help recruit and place students, and provide important introductions to individuals of influence. In return, alumni can benefit from friendships, networking, and the feeling “they are supporting a winner.”

Government/Public Relations

There is general consensus on campus and in larger regional cities that while the perception toward Nicholls State is good, public and government relations could move to an even higher level under the right new President. Many describe Nicholls State’s public image as “*good, but not well*

defined” and its legislative presence and clout were described as “*average*.”

There is also a consensus that even though public perceptions of Nicholls generally are good, the University’s public relations activities and presence in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans regions are lacking. **(59) As such, the new President must place increased attention to Baton Rouge and New Orleans as crucial markets for Nicholls in a variety of ways, but especially in terms of fund raising and student recruitment.**

A major part of success of the University in institutional image building is the work of the Office of University Relations. The Office is headed by a former journalist. His area of responsibility also includes major public events. He effectively coordinates community relations efforts. The Director has two Public Information Specialists, a photographer, the webmaster, and appropriate clerical support. **(60) We recommend that the Director of Printing and Design Services, Director of Student Publications, and the Director of Sports Information directly report to the Director of University Relations.** This will better ensure that the University does not speak with multiple voices.

Increased visibility of the University at the regional level has been helpful in attracting students. In general, radio, television, and newspaper coverage is positive and represents the mission and purpose of the University effectively. Newspaper clippings over an extended period revealed markedly high levels of substantive news coverage, though less so in metropolitan areas.

Despite an outstanding media presence in most “local” media, the University has a relatively low profile in “major” media outlets in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Apart from some athletics coverage against certain opponents, radio, television, and newspaper coverage has been surprisingly small outside their immediate communities. Improving this should be a priority of the new President.

(61) We also recommend that the University conduct an audit of all news dissemination activities. Further, the Office of University Relations should show more willingness to provide extended services to reporters and editors. Finally, the Office should develop a plan to target news media in specific cities (Baton Rouge and New Orleans) and special markets through more sophisticated media relations strategies. This should also include a new proactive system for monitoring the news media.

(62) The Director of University Relations should meet regularly with representatives of

the key local media and arrange for the new President to meet periodically with representatives of the Baton Rouge/New Orleans media, including editorial boards. As opportunities present themselves, the new President should submit “opinion pieces” to the editorial pages of the major newspapers in the state.

(63) A Public Relations Council utilizing “experts” from important media is also recommended.

Publications and the Internet

Institutional publications represent an important public relations tool. In terms of the quality of its publications, particularly those going to prospective students and alumni, Nicholls’ publications are first rate. However, (64) **the University must establish a graphic identity (and enforce it) to apply to all publications and other communications emanating from the University. All publications should be planned, designed, and finally approved for content and design by the public relations office. This must be enforced. Perhaps a “branding” consultant would be advisable.**

(65) **We recommend that the University conduct content analysis and readership studies on its most important information and promotional publications.** Judiciously selected focus groups can be helpful in evaluating selected periodicals (including admissions publications).

Most publications are produced in a quality and consistent manner. Under the guidance of the Director of Printing and Design Services, style criteria have recently been produced that establishes guidelines to which all the institution’s publications must adhere.

Much the same can be said of the University’s web site. We were told that a new web “look” was mandated by the System office in preparation for the presidential search. (66) **We recommend that the University conduct a content analysis on the use of its web site. The new site, mandated by the System office, has graphic appeal, but needs to become easier to navigate. The Web Master should work with the Director of Publication Services and Graphic Design to produce material consistent with the projected image.**

There appears to be confusion regarding how individual publications related to other areas of the University. This often results in inconsistent messages. **(67) This should be addressed through reorganization. Ultimately, a single person should be responsible for University publications (i.e. admissions, alumni/development, student publications, sports publications), and that person should be in the public relations area.**

(68) We recommend that the weekly campus newsletter be transitioned to the Internet and that the University post daily announcements on its web site. The newsletter should then be sent to faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends, legislators and other elected officials, and prospective students. Nicholls should remember that web site users ordinarily do not come to a web site looking for news. Hence, the institution often must disseminate information via e-mail. Internally, the e-news will disseminate information quickly and reduce printing costs. Externally, it will serve as a public relations cultivation tool.

(69) Finally, we recommend that the new President thoughtfully consider the present condition of institutional advancement at Nicholls State University in light of the design posited initially in this chapter. With modifications consistent with available resources and talent, a new organization could be established and underway by the winter of 2003-2004.

X. GOVERNANCE

Board of Supervisors

The reputation of the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System has improved considerably over the past few years. System CEO Dr. Sally Clausen is highly regarded by all and has impressed numerous individuals connected with Nicholls State and throughout the state with her energetic and intelligent approach to her work. “*She doesn’t sweep things under the rug,*” complimented an elected official, and “*is diplomatic and courteous,*” observed a faculty member.

While some members of the Nicholls community view the 2005 enhanced admissions standards with trepidation, most are pleased that higher standards will be forthcoming which will improve Nicholls and higher education in general. The Board is encouraged to remain steadfast in its efforts to raise standards at all of its institutions. If the Board expects students to perform to higher standards, students will measure up. It is just that simple.

Internal Governance

Nicholls State is a public corporation. It and all other universities are unique in two conditions that have long and honored roots - - academic freedom and shared governance. There are two primary documents that are generally accepted cornerstones: *The AAUP 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure* and *The 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*. Briefly, academic freedom means that faculty have the freedom to pursue responsibly the truth as they see it in their teaching and research. Where academic freedom maintains, a faculty member may not be dismissed except for “adequate cause” or “extraordinary financial exigencies.” It is customary to provide the faculty member with a one-year notice in either circumstance.

Regarding shared governance, the *1966 Statement* clearly includes faculty in the governance process and emphasizes their important role in academic standards and curricula. Nonetheless, in several places, it states unequivocally that the faculty “recommends” to the president who then acts or in turn “recommends as necessary to a governing board.” But consistent with empirical research, the *1966 Statement* does not call for direct, formal contact between faculty and the governing board. Rather, it calls for faculty (and student) recommendations to the president who may or may not endorse their positions to the board. It calls for the president to convey “faculty views including dissenting views” to the board. Nor does it call for faculty or student membership on the board or

most board committees.

Albeit the fact that the Faculty Senate has focused attention on issues that are important to many on NSU's campus (such as parking, office space, classroom conditions), discussion items such as future enrollment, program review, program additions, quality, and expanded opportunities for scholarly development have reportedly not been of major focus. That is to say, the issues most central to the future of the University have not garnered the majority of the time of Senators, according to faculty and administrators. **(70) While faculty members may have a voice in the governance of the University, it does not appear that the Senate has always provided that voice on central issues. The new President should consider appointing an ad hoc task force on University governance to consider the constitutional premises of the Faculty Association and role of the Faculty Senate. The new President should assist the Senate in ensuring an appropriate focus as faculty can often provide enlightened perspectives that can complement strong leadership.**

APPENDIX A
James L. Fisher
Review Team Chair
Brief Biography

James L. Fisher is the most published writer on leadership and organization in higher education today. He has written scores of professional articles and has also been published in such popular media as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, and *The Baltimore Sun*. The author or editor of nine books, his book, *The Board and the President*, "clearly established him as the nation's leading authority on the college presidency," wrote Michael Worth of George Washington University reviewing in *Currents*. His *The Power of the Presidency* was reviewed in *Change* magazine as "... the most important book ever written on the college presidency" and was nominated for the non-fiction Pulitzer Prize. His recent book, *Presidential Leadership: Making a Difference*, has been reviewed as "...a major, impressive, immensely instructive book, ...a virtual Dr. Spock for aspiring or new college presidents, and ...a must read for all trustees." His newest book, *Positive Power*, is quickly gaining popularity throughout the United States and internationally:

"The modern Machiavelli...from Aegon to Zenix...persuasive and to the point,"

Baltimore Sun.

"There is definitely something happening with this book. We are out of stock already,"

National Book Network

His next book, *The Entrepreneurial President*, is scheduled for publication in 2003.

A registered psychologist with a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, he is President Emeritus of the Council for Advancement & Support of Education (CASE) and President Emeritus of Towson University. He is presently Professor of Leadership Studies at The Union Institute and University and a consultant to boards and presidents. He has taught at Northwestern, Illinois State, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and the University of Georgia and has been a consultant to more than three hundred colleges and universities. He coined the term institutional review and has conducted hundreds for private and public institutions. He also conducts board orientations and consults on presidential searches, evaluations and contracts.

Dr. Fisher has been a trustee at eleven private colleges and universities and two preparatory schools. A former Marine, he presently serves as a trustee of the Marine Military Academy, Millikin University, and Florida Institute of Technology. He has received awards for teaching, writing, citizenship and leadership and has been awarded twelve honorary degrees. At Illinois State, The Outstanding Thesis Award was named by the faculty The James L. Fisher Thesis Award. The faculty at Towson University recommended that the new psychology building be named after Dr. Fisher, and the CASE Distinguished Service to Education Award bears his name.

While president at Towson, his government relations activities were sufficient to overturn gubernatorial vetoes. *The Baltimore Sun* wrote that he was a "master educational politician....under his leadership, enrollment doubled, quality went up and costs went down." In Washington, *Newsweek* magazine reported that, while President at CASE, his national campaign, The Action Committee for Higher Education (ACHE) resulted in "more than \$1 billion in student financial aid." CASE also created and orchestrated the "America's Energy is Mindpower" campaign, "Higher Education Week" and "The Professor of the Year" awards. For several years, he did a popular daily radio commentary on WBAL in Baltimore and has been an occasional OP/ED feature writer for *The Baltimore Sun*. Through the years, Dr. Fisher has been encouraged by leaders in both parties to run for Governor or Senate.

James V. Koch Brief Biography

James V. Koch is Board of Visitors Professor of Economics and President Emeritus at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. Dr. Koch served as President of Old Dominion 1990-2001. Prior to that, he was President of the University of Montana, 1986-1990. An Exxon Foundation study of American college presidents selected him as one of the 100 most effective college presidents in the United States. During his tenure at Old Dominion, the University recorded its first Rhodes Scholar, developed the largest televised, interactive distance learning system in the United States, and initiated more than \$300 million in new construction.

Dr. Koch is an economist who has published seven books and 70 refereed journal articles in the field. His *Industrial Organization and Prices* was the leading text in this specialty for several years. The focus of his current research is the economics of e-commerce. He has taught at institutions ranging from Illinois State University to Brown University, the University of Hawaii, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. His *Presidential Leadership: Making a Difference*, co-authored with James L. Fisher, is regarded as the definitive work concerning college presidents and their boards. He has been individually or collectively involved in the assessment of more than 30 presidents and institutions of higher education.

Dr. Koch earned a B.A. degree from Illinois State University and his Ph.D. degree in Economics from Northwestern University. He has received three honorary doctoral degrees from universities in Japan and Korea and has received a host of honors from organizations such as the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and several regional economic development agencies.

Scott D. Miller **Brief Biography**

Scott D. Miller, 43, became President and DuPont Professor of Leadership Studies at Wesley College in 1997. Dr. Miller has directed the most extensive restructuring process in the institution's 130-year history.

He has procured over \$30 million in capital improvement funds for technology, science instrumentation, campus physical plant upgrade and renovations, expansion of the library and student recreation facilities, and deferred maintenance. Nearly \$47 million has been raised during the past five years, earning the College accolades from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education *Circle of Excellence Awards for Overall Fund-raising Improvement* and *Overall Fund-raising Performance*. (He has raised over \$110 million during his 21 years in higher education.) He has earned numerous national accolades for his work at Wesley and is featured in a new book entitled *The Small College Guide to Financial Health* (by Michael Townsley, NACUBO: Washington, D.C., 2002) and also *Business Officer* magazine (September, 2002: NACUBO) as one of two "amazing turnaround" case studies.

Wesley's enrollment has grown from 1,052 to 2,250; residential enrollment increased by 120 percent; and full-time students more than doubled. The curriculum has been expanded to include four graduate programs, a Center for Adult Studies, and three new intercollegiate sports have been added. In 1998, he was a co-founder of the first publicly funded charter school on a private college campus in the United States—a school that enrolls 547 students in grades 1-12. He has created distance learning partnerships involving West Virginia Wesleyan College, Eastern University, and Wesley Seminary. He is a co-founder of the InterAmerican Consortium, an international collaborative of five American colleges and eight foreign institutions. When coupled with programs in The Wesley Collegiate Institute (pre-collegiate programs), total institutional enrollment has grown from 1,052 to 3,850 during Dr. Miller's five years of service.

Prior to coming to Wesley, Dr. Miller served as the 16th president of Lincoln Memorial University (1991-97). He had been an administrator at LMU since 1984, having served as vice president for development and executive vice president before being named to the top post in 1991. He also held academic rank as Professor of Leadership Studies and is President-Emeritus at LMU.

Dr. Miller earned his B.A. from West Virginia Wesleyan College, M.A. from the University of Dayton, Ed.S. from Vanderbilt University, and Ph.D. in higher education administration from The Union Institute & University. His doctoral dissertation, funded by Pew Charitable Trusts, was a landmark study on Appalachian institutional advancement. He has also completed post-graduate studies at Ohio University and Harvard University.

Farris W. Womack

Brief Biography

Farris W. Womack served as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the University of Michigan from 1988 until his retirement in 1996. During his tenure, the University's endowment grew from 300 million to more than 2 billion along with the most extensive capital construction program in the University's history. Since his retirement, he has maintained an active consulting practice with clients in venture capital partnerships, advanced Internet companies, universities, and governments.

Prior to his Michigan tenure, he was Controller of the State of North Carolina, a position he held while he continued to serve the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as its Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance. Womack's tenure in North Carolina was marked by dramatic growth in the University's endowment and significant investments in the physical plant.

Womack began his career in higher education at Henderson State University in Arkansas where he served as Assistant to the President. After taking time off to finish his doctorate, he spent four years at Arkansas State University and in 1975, he returned to the University of Arkansas where he rose through the ranks to become Executive Vice President in 1979.

In 1981, he left higher education for a two-year period to serve as the Chief Fiscal Officer for the State of Arkansas and the Director of the Department of Finance and Administration.

Womack has served on a number of boards and commissions including the Investment Advisory Committee of the Michigan State Employees Retirement System, the 13th largest pension fund in the United States. The future of the research university has been the subject of much of his writing and speaking and he is the co-author of a book on the future of the research university to be published early in 2003.

APPENDIX B

Interviewees:

Darlene Adams, Executive Secretary
Allen Alexander, Assistant Professor
Cindy Andrews, Payroll/Grants Coordinator, Controller's Office
Cherie Angelle, Student
Jenny Authement, Adjunct Faculty
Kara Authement, Student
Ray Authement, President, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Terry Authement, Lecturer
Allison Ayo, Director, ID Card Operations & Contracted Services
Donald Ayo, President, Nicholls State University
Sue Aysen, Office Coordinator
Michele Bailliet, Adjunct Faculty
Don Bardwell, Dept Chair
Dickie Barker, President, Nicholls State University Foundation
Jim Barnidge, Director, International Studies
Faye Becnel, Admin Secretary
Rick Bello, Assistant Professor
Bobby Bergeron, Parish President, Terrebonne Parish
Rob Bernardi, Athletics Director
Adrienne Bethancourt, Associate Professor
M. Khurram Bhutta, Assistant Professor
Carol Blanchard, Dept Chair
Ricky Blanton, Coach
Boysie Bollinger, ULS Board Member
Tom Bonvillain, Director, Academic Computing
Denise Bostic, Assistant Professor
David Boudreaux, Vice President for Institutional Advancement
Lydia Boudreaux, Public Information Specialist
Nicki Boudreaux, Director of Student Publications
Ronnie Boudreaux, Director, Human Resources
Lynne Bourgeois, Instructor
Roger Bourgeois, Donor
Toby Brady, Alumni
Gail Brigham, Adjunct Faculty
Chelsie Brignac, Student
Carol Britt, Dept Chair
Elsie Burkhalter, ULS Board Member
Stephanie Caballero, Executive Assistant to the President
Madeline Cagle, Instructor
Patricia Caillouet, Associate Professor
Otto Candies, III, Donor
Courtney Cassard, Assistant Director, Enrollment Services
DeeDee Cenac, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Marty Chabert, ULS Board Member
Joel T. Chaisson, State Senator, District 19
James Chapman, Grant Instructor
Jessica Clarke, ULS Board Member
Sally Clausen, President, ULS

R. Morris Coats, Argent Bank Endowed Professor of Economics
Jacqueline Cortez, Student
Andre Coudrain, ULS Board Member
Chris Cox, Dept Chair
Monique Crochet, Director, Continuing Education
Marcus Curry, Student
Sharon Daigle, Internal Auditor
Judy Daniels, Dean, Student Life
Al Danos, Donor
Robert Davidge, ULS Board Member
Al Davis, Dept Chair
Mike Davis, Assistant Vice President, Business Affairs
Mary De La Bretonne, Admin Secretary
Al Delahaye, Emeriti Professor
Mike Delaune, Director, University Relations
Eugene Dial, Vice President for Student Affairs
Rita Dickie, Donor
Brandi Domangue, Student Activities Coordinator
John Doucet, Assistant Professor
Hunt Downer, State Representative District 52
Audrey Dozar, Executive Secretary
Gracie Dubreuil, Student
Ken Duet, Dept Chair
Uric Dufrene, Dean
Daniels Duplantis, Donor
Susan Dupre, Assistant Professor
Terry Dupre, Assistant Director of Purchasing
Betty Elfert, Director, Academic Success
Carroll Falcon, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, ULS
Quentin Falgoust, Benefactor
Ronnie Fanguey, Assistant Professor
Cliff Fenton, Adjunct Faculty
Marian Fertitta, Alumni
Martin Folse, Owner, HTV
Raymond Folse, Dept Chair
John Ford, Alumni
Luke Ford, Alumni
Glenn Froisy, Facility Maintenance Manager
Gary Gallup, Associate Athletic Director for External Affairs
Barbara Gann, Admin Secretary
Mike Gauthier, President, Union Planters Bank
Butch Gautreaux, State Senator, District 21
LaToya Ghoram, Student
Susan Gilbert, Instructor
Matt Gresham, Business News Reporter, *Houma Courier* Newspaper
Olivia Ann Gresham, Assistant Professor
Grace Gueydan, Dean
Jim Gueydan, Donor
Kathy Guidry, Clerk Chief
Hugh Hamilton, President, Hibernia National Bank
John Hamner, Associate Professor
Musette Harding, Student

Robert Harrington, Dean
Rose Harris, Director, LA Center for Women & Government
Brenda Haskins, Director, Student Union
Catherine Heitman, Director, Strategy/Communications, ULS
O. Cleveland Hill, Dean
Kristie Himel, Academic Skills Specialist
Don Hingle, II, President, Houma-Thibodaux Region, Whitney National Bank
Lawrence Howell, Assistant VPAA
Michael Howes, Professor
James Irwin, Student
Cheryl Janusa, Adjunct Faculty
Mike Janusa, Interim Dept Chair
Ted Jones, Benefactor
Leslie Jones-Hamilton, Assistant Professor
Marilyn Kilgen, Dept Chair
Herbert Kimble, Alumni
Jon Kimbrough, Visiting Lecturer
Pamela Kirkley, Dept Chair
Danny Kraemer, Police Captain, University Police
Charles LaFleur, Associate Professor
Collette Lagarde, Director, Financial Aid
Jimmy Landry, Dept Chair
Alex Lasseigne, Professor
Don Lasseigne, Instructor
Easton LeBoeuf, Associate Athletics Director
Nolan LeCompte, Emeriti Professor
Stephanie Ledet, Student Leader
Douglas Lee, Assistant Vice President/Facilities Planning, ULS
Ronnie Lefort, Alumni
Timothy Lindsley, President, Faculty Senate
Glenn Lo, Associate Professor
Jimmy Long, Sr., ULS Board Member
Marilyn Mangum, Professor
Mike Matherne, Director, Campus Recreations
Carol Mathias, Interim Director, Library
Shawn Mauldin, Dept Chair
Alcie Maxwell, SGA President
Bruce McManis, Dept Chair
George L. Mehaffy, Vice President for Academic Leadership & Change, AASCU
Earl Melancon, Professor
Lauren Merrifield, Student
Steve Michot, Dept Chair
Grady Morris, Director, University Police
Thomas Mortillaro, Dean
Lionel Naquin, Vice President for Business Affairs
Mike Naquin, Asst Vice President Business Affairs for Financial Services/Controller
Richie Naquin, Alumni Federation President
Dave Nicklas, Vice President of Finance/Admin, ULS
Monica Oncale, Assistant Professor
Charles Ordoyne, Dept Chair
Alison Danielle Orgeron, Student
Marie Ory, Editor, *Nicholls Worth*

Chris Pate, Alumni
Alice Pecoraro, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Donald Peltier, Donor
Linda Peltier, Budget Officer/Assistant Controller
Chris Pena, Associate Professor
George Picou, Donor
Shirley Picou, Donor
Charlotte Pipes, Associate Professor
Angelle Prejean, Student
Gordon Pugh, Chair, Board of Supervisors
Gracie Purvis, Assistant Professor
Debbie Raziano, Alumni Director
Bill Riviere, Alumni
Chris Riviere, Donor
Susan Roark, Professor
Charlene Robertson, Human Resource Analyst
Kelly Rodrique, Director, Enrollment Services/Registrar
J. Lavone Rodrigue-Landry, Dept Chair
Carol Ronka, Director, Dyslexia Center
Gary Rosenthal, Professor
Jacinta Ruffin, Clerk Chief
Bruno Ruggiero, Director, University Printing & Design Services
Jerry Sanders, Director, Office of Disability Services & Testing
Jenny Schexnayder, Admin Secretary
Briggett Scott, Adjunct Faculty
Marlene Shaffer, Coordinator
Carl Shetler, ULS Board Member
Steve Shirley, Editor, *The Daily Review* Newspaper
Winfred Sibille, ULS Board Member
Stan Silverii, Facility Assistant Manager
Connie Sirois, Instructor
John Sirois, Alumni
Clifford Smith, Board Member, Board of Regents
Thomas Soniat, Professor
James Stewart, Dept Chair
Kurt Stiegler, Assistant Professor
Larry Stout, Associate Professor
Peter Strawitz, Dean
J. B. Stroud, Director, Graduate Studies
Carroll Suggs, ULS Board Member
Elbert Sylvest, External Legislative Auditor
Kendall Tademy, Student
Kristie Tauzin, Director of Career Services
Charles Teamer, ULS Board Member
Michelle Templet, Student
Kathy Terracina, Executive Director, Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce
Brett Terrebonne, Alumni
Mitchell Theriot, Assistant Professor
Jennifer Thompson, Lecturer
Brandie Toups, Director, Camps & Conferences
Hazel Toups, Admin Secretary
Marlene Toups, Adjunct Faculty

Tammy Toups, Executive Secretary
Connie Trahan, Student
Patrick Trahan, Adjunct Faculty
Stephen Triche, Visiting Instructor
Warren Triche, State Representative District 55
Rebecca Tucker, Assistant Vice President, Institutional Advancement
Anita Tully, Dept Chair
Bobby Turner, Allstate Insurance
Vickie Veillion, Admin Secretary
Betty Washington, Clerk Chief
Karin Watts, Instructor
Cynthia Webb, Director, Study Programs Aboard
Craig Webre, Adjunct Faculty
John Weimer, Justice, Louisiana Supreme Court
Steve Welsh, Acting Dept Chair
Oscar West, Student Activities Coordinator
Velma Sue Westbrook, Dept Chair
Constance Williams, CEO & Executive Director, Circle of Hope
Pamela Williams-Jones, Associate Professor
Dawn Wilson, Assistant Vice President/Student Affairs, ULS
Michael Woods, ULS Board Member
Benny Zachry, Professor
Jeff Zeringue, Executive Editor, *Comet* Newspaper
Forty-eight Anonymous Students, Staff, Faculty and Townspeople

APPENDIX C
NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY
REVIEW INTERVIEW FORM

Name Title Date

We have been asked to review the condition of Nicholls State University. Please respond in terms of your impression of the following. Your answers will be kept in confidence.

1. GENERAL CONDITION OF THE UNIVERSITY (STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS)

2. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

3. TECHNOLOGY

4. FACULTY (QUALITY, MORALE, WORKLOAD, COMPENSATION, ET AL)

5. STUDENTS (CREDENTIALS, MORALE, AWARENESS, RACIAL, NATIONAL, FINANCIAL AID, ET AL)

6. ADMINISTRATION

7. SENIOR OFFICERS

8. BUDGET AND FINANCE

9. FUND-RAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

10. PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

11. ALUMNI AFFAIRS

12. INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

13. CAMPUS GOVERNANCE

14. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND SYSTEM OFFICERS

15. MAIN TASKS OF THE NEW PRESIDENT

16. MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW PRESIDENT

17. COMPARATIVE CONDITION OF THE UNIVERSITY, DOCUMENTATION IF ANY

18. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

JLF 2003

APPENDIX D

Materials Used in the Review:

“Fisher Template”

Confidential position papers prepared by the departing President of Nicholls, and the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, Student Affairs/Enrollment Services and Institutional Advancement

2002-2003 Bulletin

Faculty Handbook

Organizational Chart

Administrative Staff Handbook

Strategic Plan 2001

Class Size, Faculty Workload, Faculty Preparation - Fall 2002

Fiscal Reports

- Financial Statements for fiscal year ending June 30, 2002

- Statistical Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2002

- Legislative Audit Report for fiscal years ending June 30, 1999 and June 30, 2000

- Legislative Audit Report for NSU’s Athletic Department for fiscal year ending June 30, 2001

- Operating Budget for fiscal year 2002-2003

- Quarterly financial reports (listed below) provided to the Board of Supervisors for quarters during fiscal year 2001-2002 and the first quarter of 2002-2003

- *Operating Revenue and Expenditures Analysis

- *Statement of Changes in Selected Funds

- *Statement of Changes in System Revenue Funds

- *Certification and On-Going Assurances

Promotional Pieces

- View Book and Recruiting Pamphlets

- Bayou Current (Journal)

- Jubilee Schedule (2002)

- Another Nicholls Success Story

Media Coverage - July - Dec 2002

- Media Releases - Nov and Dec 2002

- Inside Nicholls State University, Dec 19, 2002

- Colonel Football Media Guide 2002

- Colonel Softball 2002

- Colonel Baseball 2002

- Colonel Volleyball Media Guide 2002

- Colonel Basketball Media Guide 2002-2003

- The Colonel Alumni News - Winter 2000 and Spring 2002

Presidential Speeches

Conditions and Scholarship

- Departmental Publications, Research or Grant Projects/2001
- Departmental Service Activities/2001

Line Staff Charts

Board Bylaws

Policies of University of Louisiana System

Minutes of University of Louisiana System

Institutional Self-Study 1993-94

Recent Accreditation Reports

- B.S. Computer Science 2000-01
- Memo from Dean, College of Life Science & Technology

Outside Consulting Reports/Studies

- April-May 2000 Institutional Strengths & Improvements
- Goals Achievement Report-Institutional Presidents Evaluation June 1, 2002 for Fiscal Year 2001-02 (Dec 1 Status Report)

Misc. (materials relating to the substance or disposition of the University)

- 2002 Goals - Division of Student Affairs
- Peer Education Program
- Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan
- University Counseling Center
- Student Services
- Disabled Student Services
- Nicholls' Opportunities for Wellness
- University Health Services
- Career Planning and Placement Office
- Manual for Student Organizations
- Paddle - Student Handbook
- University Parking/Traffic Regulations
- Code of Student Conduct
- Family Housing
- Residence Hall Living
- Greek Life 2002/2003
- Student Union
- Post Office
- Colonel Card
- Meal Plan Options for Residence Students
- Student Organizations Handbook for Reserving Facilities