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University of Louisiana System Launches Review of Emergency Plans

BATON ROUGE – The University of Louisiana System has initiated an independent assessment of emergency plans at its eight campuses in an effort to streamline communications and operations in the event of a crisis situation. National consultants, Dewberry and Davis, LLC, are currently reviewing campus plans and will make recommendations later this fall.

Calling it “the right thing to do,” UL System President Sally Clausen expressed that “although our campuses have emergency plans and update them frequently, Dewberry will be able to enhance these efforts by incorporating best practices not just from our own universities, but also from institutions and agencies across the country.”

A comprehensive, national engineering and design firm, Dewberry and Davis, LLC, has provided programmatic support, preparation and technical assistance in emergency management services for over 20 years. Their list of clientele includes the University of Virginia, Old Dominion University, the University of North Carolina Wilmington and Virginia Tech University.

“Dewberry is proud to provide a needs assessment for the University of Louisiana System that will ultimately ensure interoperability throughout all campuses before, during and after any level of emergency or disaster, whether natural or man-made,” said Laura Johnson, Planning Program Manager for Dewberry’s Gulf Coast Operations.

The assessment of UL System campus plans will address areas such as communications, recovery, and coordination with local and statewide agencies. Campus specific recommendations for improvement will be provided in a final report.

The need for current, sound emergency plans and procedures at America’s colleges and universities was recently underscored as a result of this year’s tragedy at Virginia Tech University and the devastating hurricanes of 2005.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 of the 2007 Regular Legislative Session, with the support of Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, required each public postsecondary institution to develop and implement a comprehensive emergency response and crisis communication plan in order to be prepared to respond in a timely manner to emergency situations and events that may occur on campus.

UL System schools have been actively preparing through Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and are on the cusp of implementing text message notification systems. The Dewberry review of campus plans is another action designed to reduce risk associated with natural or manmade disasters.

“We certainly look forward to a comprehensive assessment of our plans,” said Clausen. “The findings will clearly assist us in providing for the safety of our students, faculty and staff.”

Universities

Grambling State University

Louisiana Tech University

McNeese State University

Nicholls State University

Northwestern State University

Southeastern Louisiana University

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

University of Louisiana at Monroe

Dr. Sally Clausen President

The UL System:

- Ranks among the 20 largest public systems in the U.S.
- Enrolls approx 80,000 students
- Employs over 8,000 faculty/staff
- Awards more than half of the public college degrees in Louisiana