Non-traditional students are the new tradition
About the UL System

Established in 1974, the University of Louisiana System is the largest postsecondary education system in the state, enrolling over 83,000 students and employing approximately 9,000 people at eight universities. The UL System produces the majority of the state’s public four-year graduates in education, business, engineering, nursing and pharmacy. UL System institutions are Grambling State University, Louisiana Tech University, McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Non-traditional students are the new tradition

Gone are the days when the majority of students on a university campus enrolled immediately after graduating from high school, lived in a dorm and their only job was to attend class and make good grades. Today, the average University of Louisiana System student is 25 years old, works over 20 hours a week, commutes to classes and most likely began his postsecondary education at another institution.

Throughout this publication you will meet non-traditional students attending our universities right now. I think you will find that they bring unique life experiences and determination to the classroom and that our campuses meet their unique needs.
ULM’s online MBA is the solution for this working woman.

Special scholarships, ease of transfer make Southeastern a convenient path.

Westbrook balances education at Grambling and military service.

Single mom, full-time employee and full-time McNeese nursing student.

Army Ranger finds home at Nicholls.

Non-traditional students, but a good, traditional education at Tech.

Northwestern student encourages mother to enroll.

ULM’s online MBA is the solution for this working woman.
Army Ranger
finds home at
Nicholls

Morgan City native Joshua Moffett, 25, is working toward a business administration degree at Nicholls State University, after which he plans to join his family’s video poker business—or perhaps launch a web-based marketing business of his own. And with a 3.5 GPA, the sophomore’s future looks bright.

Moffett chalks up his academic success to discipline and the ability to adapt, traits he honed as a U.S. Army Airborne Ranger. With five combat deployments under his belt—three to Iraq and two to Afghanistan—and approximately 300 combat missions throughout his six-year active enlistment, he knows what commitment means.

Nicholls knows too, and veterans like Moffett can expect priority service when they enroll in the Thibodaux institution. G.I. Jobs magazine named Nicholls a Military Friendly School for 2011—an honor shared with only 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools nationwide. The prestigious recognition stems from the ongoing efforts of Nicholls to recruit and retain active military and veteran students.

Moffett said the transition was difficult, “changing from shooting to sitting,” but Nicholls personnel guided him through it.

“We are honored to be recognized as a university that values our military students,” Courtney Cassard, director of enrollment services, said. “Everyone at Nicholls appreciates the selfless service of military personnel like Josh, and we are committed to helping them make the transition into the university setting as seamless as possible.”

Moffett said the transition was difficult, “changing from shooting to sitting,” but Nicholls personnel guided him through it.

“They helped me feel comfortable, directed me to the classes...
I needed and led me right where I needed to be,” he said.

Veterans receiving a discharge for any reason other than dishonorable are exempted from Nicholls’ admissions criteria. Military enrollees are also eligible for early registration – before the general student population.

In addition, the Nicholls administration has identified a group of individual faculty advisors to serve as veterans’ advocates. Veteran students may consult with the advisors for information, advice or understanding as they work their way through the combat-to-classroom transition.

Metairie, La., native Alexander Dauphin, an infantryman in the Louisiana Army National Guard and a student at Nicholls, said university personnel helped him enroll and register for classes while he was still serving in Iraq, whence he returned to Louisiana in August 2010.

“I especially appreciate their help in getting ready for school,” Dauphin said. “They took it to a personal level; other schools I looked at treated me like a number. They understood the time zone difference between here and Iraq; they helped me through the enrollment process; and they helped me get all the benefits I was eligible for.”

For additional information about Nicholls’ services for veterans and active service military members, call (985) 448-4507 or go to www.nicholls.edu/admission. Click “Veteran Admissions” under the “Undergraduate Admissions” link on the left side of the page.

Prospective veteran students can learn about requisite exams, steps for re-enrollment after deployment and other services and requirements.
Stephanie Maney knew she had something to say, but only a college education would help her learn how to say it more effectively.

Maney, a 52-year-old senior English major at Northwestern State University, is originally from New Orleans. She and her family came to Natchitoches in August 2005, the day before Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, to stay with her daughter, Adryan, who was attending Northwestern. Maney ended up living in Natchitoches and eventually enrolled at Northwestern.

Maney had grown to love Natchitoches from the time her daughter visited the Northwestern campus. She never thought about enrolling for classes at Northwestern until one day when she was watching television.

“I was watching a forum on Hurricane Katrina and one of the speakers said something that moved me and I started to write,” said Maney. “I ended up writing an epic poem, but I had no avenue for it and had no way to be heard. It’s titled ‘One Time, More.’ The poem is very spiritual and speaks volumes to me.”

“I was talking to my husband, Ronald, about it and our daughter overheard us. She said I should go back to college.”

Maney attended college in New Orleans more than 20 years ago, but began raising her family and didn’t complete her undergraduate degree.

“Maney’s daughter, Adryan, earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Northwestern in December 2009.

There was some concern on Maney’s part when she was get-
Northwestern State student Stephanie Maney (right) discusses class work with Dr. Sarah McFarland, head of the Department of Language and Communication at Northwestern.

“Ting ready to go back to college, but it was not the type of worry most students have when they go back to class after a long absence.

“I had a lot of apprehension because of the advances in technology. I hadn’t worked with computers. When I was in college, the most advanced machine was the mimeograph machine,” she said. “I knew I had the drive and energy to succeed. I believed the Lord was with me and because of is mercy and grace, He was going to help me pass.”

And she has done more than just pass, making the Dean’s List by earning a 3.5 or better grade point average. Maney is on track to graduate in May.

“The faculty at Northwestern have been amazing. I felt like I was where I needed to be,” said Maney. “They have so much knowledge to share. They are welcoming of all types of questions and are ready, willing and able to assist students. The faculty wear their hearts on their sleeves and show you how to have that same passion.”

She has also been available to mentor and give advice to students who are about the same age as her daughter.

“I don’t volunteer advice or push myself on students, but when they have questions, I will always try to help them,” said Maney. “Then when I started helping some of them, the word got around that I was someone who they could count on to assist them.”

Maney plans to use what she has learned at Northwestern to return to New Orleans and enroll in graduate school. She also plans to help her church, Temple Zion Ministries, continue to rebuild.

“I won’t just graduate to have a degree. I have learned a lot about the components of writing,” said Maney. “I am doing the same things I have always done in writing poetry, but now I know the proper concepts, structure and terminology. I began writing poetry in 1975 and now I know how to write essays, memoirs and technical writings. When I see something or hear something, it may strike a memory and move me to sit down and write a poem that can benefit someone’s life. Now that I am almost finished with my undergraduate degree, I still look towards the horizon with hope, belief and determination.”
What can a busy marketing professional do to advance her career and education while also taking care of two children, a spouse and herself?

For Sheila Snow, communications director of the Monroe-West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau, the answer was as close as a laptop computer and access to the Internet. Snow's background in marketing and public relations, along with the excellent undergraduate education she received at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, prepped her well for her current job.

But as she began to contemplate an MBA, she wondered how she would juggle the demands of an advanced degree with the demands of a full-time job and family. The University of Louisiana at Monroe's new online MBA program was a perfect fit, according to Snow.

“I'm a busy person. I have a full-time job, a family, and many other activities that I am involved in,” she said. “This program is flexible without sacrificing the quality of a good education. It was designed for non-traditional students like me. I can work on assignments at night, on weekends, and even if I'm traveling out of town.”

Snow had been looking into online programs for a few years but could not find one that felt like just the right fit for her particular needs. When she discovered her own alma mater, ULM, had plans for an online program she sent her application in just weeks later. She says she appreciates the opportunity to re-establish ties to the university and the excellent business program with which she is already familiar.

ULM began offering the distinctive, yet affordable, online MBA...
“This is only my second semester, but I have already learned so much,” Snow said. “Graduate school is tough. But I am blessed with a great support system, and that helps me put in the time and effort that is needed for the program. As I look ahead at my future, I am sure that this program will help me to achieve my career goals.”

Asked if she would recommend the iMBA at ULM for others, Snow responded, “Oh, absolutely. In fact, I already have!” Snow is not alone; ULM’s online students increased 126 percent between 2008 and 2010.

For more information, visit ULM’s Gold Program Web site online at www.ulm.edu/mbaonline.
Dory Ann St. Julien is no stranger to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The 38-year-old sophomore is a returning student who began her college career in 1999.

That year, she studied psychology, lived on the fifth floor of Denbo Hall and saw the university change its name. But, her timing on campus wasn’t right. “I just wasn’t focused enough,” the Lafayette native explained. Ultimately, she withdrew from the university.

St. Julien entered the workforce full-time at that point and spent 10 years with a communications company. She was laid off in 2009. “I spent my New Year’s Eve packing my office,” she said. “I filed for unemployment and thought ‘I can’t just sit here.’”

So, she didn’t. She decided to return to UL Lafayette with a stronger focus and eagerness to learn. “I’m paying more attention in class and I’m taking things more seriously this time,” she said.

Reentry to the university, as in St. Julien’s case, is easy. Students returning to campus should first fill out a new application, which can be completed online. “Next, they receive a letter from the university regarding their status, and if they are re-admitted, they receive advising information,” said Mary Bourque, reentry coordinator in UL Lafayette’s Academic Success Center. “After that, they get advised and register.”

She suggested students apply the semester before they enroll. That way, early advising and registration may be available.

“I assist students through the process, and sometimes advise them if they have completed less than 45 hours,” Bourque said. “If they have more than 45 hours, they get advised by their dean’s office.”
Also, in many cases, previously completed coursework still counts, depending upon the major a reentry student chooses and whether the course has changed. An academic dean evaluates the student’s transcript during the first semester of reenrollment to determine what courses carry over.

“The process is really quite simple for these students who may be finishing an earlier program, pursuing a new major, pursuing a second degree or taking courses for their own benefit,” said Bourque.

As for being back on campus, St. Julien said there are some noticeable changes. For starters, the dormitory she called home in 2009 will be torn down this month. Both Denbo and Bancroft halls, which stand next to each other, will be demolished to make way for new, contemporary housing. The work is part of a major construction project that will add student housing on campus.

Since the 1990s, many buildings have been added or renovated. Dupré Library was expanded and updated, for example.

“Just being on campus, you can see the vast improvements,” she said.

The application process and scheduling of classes were all new to her as well. “When I was here before, we were looking through newspapers to find our classes. Now, everything is done on the computer. It’s all online,” she said.

When asked, St. Julien said she believes she has an advantage over students just starting out.

“I know firsthand that it hurts when you are paying back student loans and you don’t have a degree,” she said. “I’m going to make it count this time. I’m not going to waste a second.”

Earlier this month, she began her second semester. Once she graduates, she plans to work in medical records management.

“It’s really exciting to be starting on this path right now. This field is emerging as more and more records are becoming electronic. I could work in a hospital or I could travel.”

For More Information Visit: www.louisiana.edu
Candace Westbrook has always loved science but never thought it would be possible to pursue a college degree while on active duty in her mid 20’s until she met a few Historically Black College and University (HBCU) alums that coincidentally benefited from the ROTC program.

Candace joined the United States Air Force a few years after high school. She served on active duty for six years and has been in the Army’s National Guard for the last three years (and counting), and during that time she met some wonderful people.

Little did she know that while stationed in Wyoming those new friends that she encountered would encourage her to go to college full-time and pursue her dream, a dream to teach biology and chemistry. However, she did not want to return home to Little Rock, Arkansas to go to school. Rightfully so, Candace wanted to attend an HBCU away from home but not too far away.

Grambling State University (GSU) alumna and next-door-neighbor Gwen Adams had always talked about Grambling and the teacher education program being what she called, “the best in the state.”

When she started to take a closer look at Grambling it finally hit her that her veteran’s benefits could help cover the expenses to enroll at GSU. When other students discuss alternative plans to go to college Candace always suggests “do not drop-out of school to go into the military. Go to school first and

Sixteen percent of GSU undergraduate students are 25 years old or older. An overwhelming majority of those adult students are female.
join the ROTC program. ROTC has an excellent program, 30 days of paid vacation and a good job after graduation.”

Westbrook is a senior and plans to receive a degree in biology education with an additional certification in chemistry. She looks forward to teaching biology and chemistry. Candace is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, providing service to all mankind. She is also an esteemed affiliate of the Iota Tau Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education where they routinely provide tutoring for students in the laboratory schools on GSU’s campus among other service-oriented organizations.

Candace is not unique at Grambling State University. Sixteen percent of GSU undergraduate students are 25 years old or older. An overwhelming majority of those adult students are female. Another interesting fact is that 160 (or 23 percent) of adult undergraduate students enrolled at Grambling come from other countries.

Grambling State University is a community of learners who strive for excellence in their pursuit of knowledge and who seek to contribute to their respective major academic disciplines. The university prepares its graduates to compete and succeed in careers related to its programs of study, to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, and to lead productive lives as informed citizens in a democratic society.

The university provides its students a living and learning environment which nurtures their development for leadership in academics, athletics, campus governance, and in their future pursuits. The university affords each student the opportunity to pursue any program of study provided that the student makes reasonable progress and demonstrates that progress in standard ways. Grambling fosters in its students a commitment to service and to the improvement in the quality of life for all persons.
Ruebush is a single mom, full-time employee and full-time McNeese nursing student

By Renee LeLeux

Single mom, full-time student, full-time employee—all of these describe Lauryn Ruebush, 31, a DeQuincy senior nursing major at McNeese State University.

Ruebush commutes 45 minutes both ways every day to attend her classes in Lake Charles, and her son, Reed, 9, has a tough time with his mom’s busy schedule as a nursing student during the week and as a licensed practical nurse working full-time on the weekends at a local hospital. But she tells him “everything will be better for us down the road.”

As an adult learner, she said returning to the classroom after receiving her LPN degree from Sowela Technical Community College in 2003 has been a challenge, but that she’s had great support from both her family and faculty in the McNeese College of Nursing.

“Having a supportive family helps tremendously,” said Ruebush. And she has several family ties to McNeese. Both her mom and an uncle are McNeese graduates and her late grandfather, state Rep. Horace Jones, worked with other area legislators to establish McNeese as a four-year university back in 1950.

So, with all the McNeese connections, one would think attending McNeese for Ruebush was an easy decision. However, she said her road to McNeese was a “long and winding” one.

Ruebush graduated from Starks High School in 1997 and enrolled at a large state university. Within a short time, she had changed her major and transferred to another state university. Finally, she left school to become a massage therapist. “After obtaining my certification, I took a break and became a mom and moved back to DeQuincy.”

But eventually she decided to continue to pursue a nursing degree. “The nursing profession is one of those careers that provides job security and that was important for me since I am a single mom,” said Ruebush. And she said nurses run in her fam-
eligibility requirements - to transfer into the BSN program, according to Rebecca Riley, head of the undergraduate nursing program at McNeese.

“McNeese’s College of Nursing made this an easy transition,” said Ruebush. “The nursing staff ensured that my transfer was a good one.” Right now she is on course to receive her nursing degree in December 2011.

Ruebush said that being an adult learner has made her more appreciative of what she’s doing. “With age comes maturity,” she said. “I am utilizing my previous working experience in the classroom and these experiences have helped me become a better nurse.”

She said she’s had no problems re-entering the classroom as an adult learner. However, she’s found that she has had to organize her time a little more wisely. “Sometimes I think I’m stretched too thin working 30 hours on the weekends, taking 18 hours of classes and being a single mom. But this is what I want to do to make a better life for me and my son.”

Ruebush’s future plans include a family nurse practitioner degree. “But right now, all I am focused on is obtaining my BSN degree. McNeese has been a good fit for me at this point in my life.”
When Caleb and Roseanna "Rosie" Atwell of Denham Springs were considering their college career paths, they had to look no further than their immediate family. The siblings followed the approach their older sister used: start at a convenient, nearby community college then transfer to Southeastern Louisiana University to complete their college education.

Caleb, a senior general business major at Southeastern, started at Baton Rouge Community College and enrolled in its associate degree program in business. BRCC and Southeastern are cooperating partners in what is called a “2+2” program. That means once Caleb successfully completed a prescribed curriculum at BRCC, all his course work would seamlessly transition into a business program at Southeastern with no detailed paperwork required for his Southeastern application.

"I chose BRCC as the place to start because it was close and convenient to home, as well as relatively inexpensive," he said. "My older brother and sister had both gone there, so I was familiar with the school. I had a good experience there. I earned my Special scholarship, ease of transfer make transition to Southeastern a convenient path.

By Rene Abadie

Roseanna "Rosie" Atwell takes a break between classes at Southeastern.
associate degree in business and decided to continue at Southeastern.”

Rosie’s story is similar. While being home-schooled for high school, she started taking general education courses at BRCC concurrently as a junior - courses such as English, math, and social studies. Thanks to these earned credit hours, she started at Southeastern last fall as a sophomore in family and consumer sciences and looks forward to going into a graduate program in counseling.

“Southeastern has long been committed to working with students who begin their post-secondary education experience at a community or technical college and then want to continue at a four-year university,” said President John L. Crain. “We have worked closely with our colleagues at institutions in the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to better serve Louisiana students, particularly across southeast Louisiana.”

The university has signed affiliation agreements with BRCC, River Parishes Community College in Sorrento and Delgado Community College in New Orleans to make the transition an easier process for those students looking to continue their education beyond the associate degree level.

While they could have chosen other nearby institutions, the Senator Ben Nevers Transfer Scholarship made the Hammond-based institution an attractive choice for the Atwells. The scholarship, which honors the Washington Parish-based senator’s longstanding commitment to higher education and his desire to ease the transition for transfer students, requires no application and is automatically awarded to qualified students when they apply and are accepted at Southeastern. Requirements include a minimum of 12 hours of transferrable credit with a 3.0 or higher grade point average.

That was a definite selling point for Caleb, who also holds a scholarship from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and a College of Business Charles Wesley Merritt Scholarship. “The Nevers Scholarship was automatic; I didn’t have to apply, and it continues as long as I maintain my grade point average,” said Caleb, who is now working as a teller at a Baton Rouge bank. “My ongoing education in business is one of the reasons I got the job.” With a goal of pursuing a career in banking and eventually working for the FBI, he expects to start working on a master of business administration program at Southeastern after he graduates with his undergraduate degree in December.

Both agree their college experiences have been pleasant. “I like it at Southeastern a lot,” said Caleb, who described the business study abroad opportunity he had last summer in Costa Rica as “unforgettable.” Rosie agrees: “It’s a very comfortable, beautiful campus,” she said, “and the faculty are extremely nice and helpful.”
When Shanda Rowe found her longtime job being outsourced, she made a decision to do something she hadn’t done in more than 30 years – go back to college.

From her home in Minden, La., she found a welcoming campus 30 miles away in Ruston at Louisiana Tech University.

“I really do feel taken care of, not shoved off to the side,” said Rowe, who falls into the familiar category of “non-traditional student” at Tech.

“I love all my teachers; they’ve been very supportive of me. Everyone has been.”

Rowe, 52, attended Tech for a year after her high school graduation in 1976, then dropped out to marry, raise a family and work full-time. Hers is a familiar reason for being in college while not being a teen or a twenty-something -- but there are many others; Rowe and her fellow non-traditional students now make up 34 percent of Tech’s total student enrollment, up from 31 percent five years ago.

“The non-traditional students bring strengths to our classrooms in their maturity, life experience and ability to demonstrate a real goal-focus,” said Pamela Moore,

Non-traditional students, but a good, traditional education at Tech

By Teddy Allen
director of Tech’s Division of Nursing. “We have non-traditional students enrolled in both our campus and extension nursing programs.”

In fact, nearly half the students in nursing - 79 of 164 - are ages 24 and above; 19 are 37 years of age or older.

Often non-traditional students are pursuing an advanced degree or are a parent, or both, something Tech’s faculty understands.

“We have a student graduating this quarter who is also working on her master’s in counseling degree,” Moore said. “The last time I talked with her, she would be earning both her Associate of Science in Nursing AND her counseling degree. We had to do some juggling and fine tuning and planning in her case. She’s a single mother with a school-aged child. Frankly, I don’t know how she did it, but she did.”

“I had to miss two days recently because of illness, but my teachers sent me assignments through email and I was able to turn in work the next day,” said Rowe, who is pursuing her associate’s degree to become a registered health information technologist. “I feel like the University has been there for me.

Rowe’s youngest daughter is also a non-traditional student of sorts; a senior at Minden High School, Anna is taking Tech courses through its dual enrollment program. Next year when Rowe’s oldest daughter goes back to school, all three will be enrolled at Tech.

To help students get as good of an education through non-traditional as traditional means, the University is constantly monitoring, upgrading and checking each of its non-traditional educational channels. Many of Tech’s non-traditional students are served through continuing education’s non-credit courses, through the Barksdale Program at Barksdale Air Force Base, and through Global_Campus, which offers quality educational opportunities to meet the needs of undergraduate, graduate, and non-traditional students - anytime, anywhere.

The Global_Campus is not a separate entity offering academic courses for credit apart from the University; the Global_Campus is Louisiana Tech University online. Nine degrees, three add-on certifications and four graduate post-baccalaureate certificates are available via distance learning.

Also, through “Tech After 55,” students age 55 and older qualify for a tuition/fee waiver, which deeply discounts the cost of taking a class.