

MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT

The \$1.8 million renovation and repair project for Kaufman Hall should have begun early in the summer. We believe that we are on the verge of seeing some progress. We ask for your patience – the inconvenience is unavoidable and it won't last forever.

The legislature approved planning money to begin the \$6 million renovation and repair of the existing Frazar Memorial Library building. This project has been our Number One priority among new capital outlay requests. The renovation and expansion of the Library will be funded, in part, and the expansion of the building remains unfunded for now.

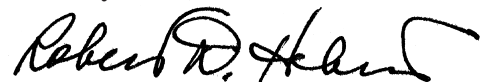
Nearly everyone on the campus will be involved in the preparation for the institutional reaffirmation accreditation visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in January, 2007, and the re-certification of our athletic programs by the NCAA in May, 2006. Your assistance and input are necessary for the success of these, and other, accreditation evaluations.

As we begin this 66th year, I want to thank each of you for serving our University and our students. Many of you work very hard and unselfishly to help improve this University and your own departments. "Excellence with a Personal Touch" is more than just a slogan; for many of us, it is a creed.

Building an excellent university is the work of all of us. Together we are taking this University to a higher level.

I am personally grateful for your commitment and your many outstanding accomplishments. I wish you more great successes this year.

Sincerely,



The President's Memo, an informational report, is published regularly throughout each semester and during the summer session as necessary. Copies are distributed to every employee through interoffice mail and the reports are posted on the McNeese Web page.



EEO/ADA/AA OMS 08/05



MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT

From the office of Dr. Robert Hebert
Hotline 475-5587

President's Memo 8/18/05

Welcome to the opening of the University's 66th academic year.

I believe that it's important to begin each year with a reminder that our core values impact everything we do including institutional planning, budgetary decisions, departmental plans, progress reports, and much more.

Our four core values are:

1. A Commitment to Academics
2. Student Success
3. Fiscal Responsibility
4. Community-University Linkages

The Commitment to Academics continues to be the most important of these core values. The focus we place on academics is evidenced by the many professional contributions and achievements of our talented faculty.

During the last academic year you have produced works of art and authored numerous articles in journals and other publications having national and international significance.

The Department of English and Foreign Languages celebrated the publishing of the 100th book by its faculty and alumni. That is a phenomenal accomplishment, and one that is highly unusual even for departments three times our size.

You and your students have been invited to attend and present papers and artwork at various state, regional, and national conferences. Many of you serve on professional association boards and committees.

- An assistant professor of English has been named a Senior Fulbright Scholar and will spend six months at the University of Cardiff in Wales teaching and conducting research for a new book. This is the 10th McNeese faculty member to receive a Fulbright Scholar Award.
- A member of the music faculty was selected as a voting member of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences, and served as a participant in selecting recipients for the 47th Annual Grammy Awards.
- Faculty in the colleges of education and science received grants to provide training for professional development for PreK-12 teachers in core content subjects.
- We have received a \$1,130,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to fund a program to increase the number of McNeese graduates in science, engineering, and engineering technology.

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Last year, the total of sponsored research grants and contracts by McNeese faculty totaled more than \$6.2 million. We are already on the way to meet or surpass that total in 2005-06.

Our students also excelled both in, and out, of the classroom due to the encouragement and academic preparation provided by our faculty.

- The speech and debate team won the national championship in Team Sweepstakes at the Annual Novice National (Individual Events) Tournament for the third consecutive year. The competition consisted of over 1,200 students from 67 schools from across the country.
- Electrical engineering students won first place in the design competition at the regional conference in Denver. The McNeese team defeated teams from Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

Our engineering graduates also had a good year.

- A 1999 graduate was one of the production development and design engineers for the Ford Mustang, the first major redesign for the car in 20 years. Another played a role in the design of the Mars Rover.
- Our students continued to have success on the professional examinations. Radiologic technology majors achieved a 100% pass rate on their licensure exam; education majors also scored 100% on the PRAXIS exam. The graduation rate for students entering the bachelor of science in nursing program averages above 90%; and engineering students had a 92% passage rates on the professional engineering exam, which exceeds the national passage rate by 10%.
- During the spring semester, the first French exchange student in business attended McNeese under a new agreement between the University and the Ecole Superieure Libre des Sciences Commerciales Appliquées, an accredited business school in Paris. Two of our students are attending ESLSCA this fall. The average ACT score last fall for entering freshmen at McNeese was 20.1, which remains unchanged from the previous fall. The national average was 20.9, and the state remained at 19.6.

This summer we marked the 13th consecutive enrollment increase. This trend began with the summer 2001 academic term.

I want to express my thanks for the cooperation we've received from deans and department heads in adding classes and opening sections to respond to the enrollment increases. Our number one budget priority is, and will always be, to cover classes.

Some of the demand has been met by Visiting Lecturers – especially in the critical area of General Education courses. Meanwhile, McNeese continues to have the fewest number of administrative staff positions among all eight institutions in the University of Louisiana System.

MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT

The freshman to sophomore retention rate has risen from 69.4% in 2002 to nearly 76%, which surpasses the national average. Our next goal is 80% and it is critical that we continue to focus on enrollment and retention efforts.

Higher admission standards for all public universities were implemented this fall semester as part of the Board of Regents' Master Plan for Higher Education, and we anticipate a smaller freshman class. If that trend should continue, it means that even with strong retention rates, the University could soon face a time when we are retaining students from a smaller pool.

Obviously, student retention is very important, but I want to emphasize a point I've made in the past. Retention is not about lowering standards; it's about each of us providing students with the assistance and support they need to enable them to improve their chances of being successful scholastically.

Final enrollment numbers for this fall will not be available until the official reporting day, September 9.

Student tuition and fees have increased again. All universities in the state increased tuition by 3% beginning this past summer. The tuition increase will be covered by TOPS and averages \$46 per semester for a full-time student. Total tuition and fees for this academic year will be \$3,159, which is the lowest in the ULS and 24.8% below the SREB average. The tuition level is the same at all ULS schools, but self-assessed fees vary by institution depending on the actions of student bodies at individual campuses.

Regarding the overall budget, new state mandates were partially funded. These include new cost increases of \$1,362,396 for civil service merit raises, risk management insurance premiums, employee health insurance, and retirement expenses. The University must absorb \$649,206, or 48%, of these costs.

In addition, the University will face higher scholarship costs and significant increases in utility charges this fiscal year. Higher student tuition and fees are having to fill the void created by the unfunded portion of the mandates.

Last year, for the first time in the history of the institution, half of the University's budget was generated by student tuition and fees. Enrollment, therefore, has become vital to us all – and getting more so each year.

In fact, merit raises would not have occurred had it not been for recent enrollment trends. The University will, once again, provide merit increases for faculty that were employed prior to July 1, 2005, and participated in the spring Annual Performance Review. Category one merit raises are 4% and category two are 2%.

Unclassified staff employed prior to July 1 will receive a 4% pay increase effective January 1, 2006.

Several capitol outlay projects will begin this fall. Construction will begin soon on the \$12.8 million renovation and expansion of the Shearman Fine Arts Building. The Alumni Association is raising funds to complete the final phase of the Entrance Plaza. Proceeds from the commemorative brick campaign will be used to commission the large bronze statue of the horse and rider as well as other enhancements.