College seeks accreditation

by Michelle L. Kratz
News Editor

The University's college of business administration is going to "light some fires" around the state, according to newly appointed dean of the college, David P. Manuel.

"We have faculty in the college of business who are publishing in the very best journals in the country, and faculty in finance whose papers have just recently been accepted at the Financial Management Association," Manuel said.

According to Manuel, these achievements will help the college of business gain national accreditation, which they have been trying to obtain for eight years.

A former economics professor, Manuel replaced Dean Rexford Hauser in July. He said that he agreed to take the position for one year while the administration searches for a permanent dean.

In the meantime, Manuel will be looking for programs that will help the college of business obtain national accreditation.

"National accreditation will mean that we have some standards that are upheld and are quite high. There are only 220 nationally accredited colleges in the country out of 1,000 or more business colleges. We are talking about a very elite group," Manuel said.

The business college is already accredited under the Southern Association of Business Schools. Last year, an accreditation team evaluated the business college and found it lacking.

"One of the problems that the team found was that there were not enough Ph.D.s in finance and quantitative methods. These are areas in which there is a serious scarcity of Ph.D.s as compared to the demand," Manuel said.

"We face competition with other universities and with the corporate world for these individuals."

There was also some concern over the business college's access to personal computers. According to Manuel this problem is being redressed quickly.

"We are in the process of buying eleven personal computers for faculty and departmental research, and we are making headway to integrate personal computers into the classroom," he said.

A positive thing that the research team noticed was the college of business's endowment fund which will be available soon, making possible some of the plans to upgrade the business college, Manuel said.

According to Manuel, another thing that will work in favor of accreditation is the faculty.

"To a large extent the productivity of the faculty of the college of business is unsung," he said.

"We are providing a good foundation for research and for promoting stable economic growth in the region. I think the USL college of business is going to light some fires around the state. The kind of research that the faculty is doing is the first step that will light some fires around the state," he said.

"For example, Dr. Bruce Paine (finance) is giving a paper at the Financial Management Association in a few months. The Financial Management Association is one of the two major Financial associations in the nation," he said.

"Dr. Frank Urbancic (accounting), has had numerous publications in the Journal of Accounting, Accounting Review, and in all types of CPA Journals," he added.

USL's Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam pass rate has been very high, another factor that will help toward accreditation.

"The pass rate has been ranking close to UNO for the past two years. But last May, it was higher than UNO's pass rate at 49 percent. UNO had a pass rate of 42 percent and LSU of 40 percent," Manuel said.