Higher education opportunities expand in BR

Capitol News Bureau

Baton Rouge is served by three public universities:
- Louisiana's largest university and its "flagship" campus, LSU-Baton Rouge.
- Southern and Southeastern.
- One of the nation's largest black campuses, Southern University.
- Baton Rouge Community College, which opened in 1998 and already has more than 2,400 students.

In addition, Baton Rouge has a private institution, Our Lady of the Lake College, that offers some two- and four-year degrees.

Also within easy driving distance of Baton Rouge are two growing regional centers of higher education, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond.

The newest school in the area, two-year-old Baton Rouge Community College has open admissions, meaning it accepts any Louisiana resident with a high-school diploma.

BRCC offers lower-level college courses that are accepted by LSU, as well as technical degrees like the associate of applied science in process control technology, which grooms students for jobs at petro-chemical plants.

Officials at the fledgling college expect their enrollment to hit 10,000 within five years, and plans are underway to relocate the adjacent Louisiana State Police headquarters to make room for expansion.

Louisiana residents pay $528 per semester to take a full-time course load — 12 hours or more — at the two-year school.

One of the factors behind the growth of BRCC is the fact that LSU has fairly high standards for admission.

Southern University is now an open-admissions school, but plans to start requiring modest admission standards in the fall of 2001.

LSU generally enrolls freshmen who earned better-than-average grades on a specific college-preparatory curriculum in high school or who otherwise prove they are ready for college courses.

LSU's main campus in Baton Rouge is by far the state's largest university, enrolling 30,977 last fall.

LSU offers a broad spectrum of education in the arts, sciences, engineering, business, music, design, education, agriculture and veterinary medicine.

The university is proud of its engineering college and boasts one of the best petroleum engineering programs in the nation, according to a national magazine.

LSU is a federal land grant and sea grant college, and conducts extensive research in agriculture and water-related fields.

One LSU researcher developed microbes that "eat" oil, a technology used to fight oil spills.

Tuition is $1,572 per semester for in-state students, with all credits hours over the first 12 at no additional tuition cost.

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