The Center for Louisiana Studies is working to restore and find a new home in a 118-year-old mansion on the corner of University Avenue and Johnston Street.

With a rich history, university ties and impressive architecture, the Roy House seemed the perfect fit for a new, more visible home for the Center for Louisiana Studies, which now operates out of the third floor of the Edith Garland Dupré Library, according to Center for Louisiana Studies Director Joshua Caffery, Ph.D.

“It’s a historical building. The Center for Louisiana Studies is charged with the study of Louisiana culture and history. It’s also a very prominent building,” Caffery said, adding visibility is crucial to making the center accessible to the public.

The Center for Louisiana Studies is under the University of Louisiana at Lafayette College of Liberal Arts and works to preserve and give public access to archived materials regarding Louisiana history. One of the most common materials the Center works with are tape recordings of oral histories and Cajun folk songs.

“Since 1973, the center has worked not only to preserve the state’s rich heritage, but also to make it accessible to scholars, students and the general public,” the center’s website reads.

Caffery said the center will set up a reading room in the Roy House for students to access, read and listen to archived materials, as well as a storefront for the UL Press to sell published works.

“In here will be a reading room and a storefront for the UL Press which is a part of the Center for Louisiana Studies,” Caffery said while gesturing to two rooms at the front of the house, adding the gardens behind the house might be used as a concert space and the upstairs will be used for offices.

According to Caffery, the Roy House was built in 1901 by local businessman J. Arthur Roy as a private home, the same year UL Lafayette opened. Today, it is the only property on the National Register of Historic Places owned by the university.

“It’s all pretty amazing that it’s all still intact. At one time this was used as a frat house,” Caffery said, referring to the delicate woodwork around the staircase.

Caffery said the restoration project is mainly funded through private donations, meaning the move-in date for the center is uncertain until the project is fully-funded.

“Once we raise the money, it will be about a year. We would love to raise the money within the next two years,” Caffery said, “That’s all contingent on whether or not we can find people that will give to us.”

Elijah List, a sophomore communications major, said he noticed the mansion was under construction, but didn’t give it much thought.

“I saw (the Roy House) when I first moved here. It was just an old, dilapidated building. It didn’t attract much attention at all,” List said.

He said he thinks students will find the building useful after it is restored and after the Center for Louisiana Studies moves in.

“You have all of these students in anthropology and stuff like that. They don’t have anywhere to study and research other than Mouton Hall. To have a place where they can go and research Louisiana history... It’s a really smart move on behalf of the university,” List said.

Contractor Geoffrey Thompson, who has restored century-old houses for 15 years and is partnered with GFP Construction to restore the Roy House, said the house is in remarkable condition for its age.

“The intact original materials are overwhelmingly good. To have all that there... Now I know I can put it back to the way it was,” Thompson said.

However, Thompson said the house is challenging to work on in a number of ways, including water damage to the brick foundation and widespread brick insulation which weighs down the house and causes damage to the wooden columns supporting it.

“There’s some environmental things that have caused structural damage to the house. That’s why it looks the way it does now because part of the house has actually started to settle and collapse a little bit from rotting out,” Thompson said, adding the team has lifted up the house to work on the foundation and bottom pillars.

Thompson said the project is interesting to him on a personal level.

“We’re trying to save this house and get it back into shape. It’s a fascinating-
FEES

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and that the burden shouldn’t be on the shoulders of every student.

Moore also acknowledged that the fees were passed by a student body referendum, but lamented the fact that most of the current student body was not involved, and called for current students to have a voice.

"I believe it’s in the best interest of the organizations, their members and non-member students to explore other means of funding such as fundraising, outside donations and individual membership fees," Moore said. "This idea of individual responsibility rather than a collective tax for funding boosts passion and interest for those who are really motivated and willing to invest. It doesn’t disenfranchise the rest of the student body, (who) could potentially resent an organization it funds but doesn’t participate in."

Moore and YAL have been met with some ideological opposition by students like Rex Jones, an SGA graduate school senator. Jones said the problem is students don’t see the real value in the services they are paying for, and that he struggles to see a viable alternative to the current system.

He also expressed that rising student fees don’t necessarily correlate with a lack of responsible spending.

"We’d all like to see lower fees, but what fees do YAL propose to cut?" Jones said. "Their most popular targets are cheerleading fees and other student initiatives... This student body cannot cut valuable student services just because the student chooses not to find value in the arts, journalism, reduced child care and campus traditions... We pay way more for ‘energy’ and ‘auxiliaries’ than we do for student initiatives."

Jones pushed back on the idea of a lack of transparency regarding fees. He also suggested that additional motivation for the protests is rooted in a desire to fulfill campaign promises.

"This checkbook, a major plank of Lautigar’s campaign, is designed to increase transparency by displaying to the public an itemized list of expenditures from accounts funded by student fees," Jones said. "Kaleb Moore served in the judiciary branch of SGA with Lautigar... I believe that, in order to apply pressure to the administration, YAL, led by Moore and Lautigar, has been using #cutthefeef to apply pressure to university administration to make good on Ms. Lautigar’s campaign promises."

This dichotomy of ideas and positions regarding fees are an illustration of the controversy caused by the current state of higher education funding in Louisiana. The problem doesn’t seem to be going away, as the most recent state budget called for major cuts to both higher education and public safety. Some students like Jones can sympathize with this reality.

"The university is a multimillion dollar operation hamstrung by the limited avenues through which it can raise capital and by meticulous laws that detail the ways in which funds can be spent," Jones said. "I think students need to wake up and realize that tuition has risen everywhere across the country. Affording college has become a national problem... I think instead of demonstrations, we need discussions."

However, costly current university projects create a perceived lack of priority management on the part of UL Lafayette administration. These projects make the idea that the university is strapped for cash less believable for protesters like Moore. The current increase in housing, which was met with great opposition when announced, is an example.

"I believe that raising student fees without sufficient explanation is harmful to the students as well as the faculty," Moore said. "Personally, it is concerning to me that luxury apartments and an amphitheater can be built immediately following the cuts in state funding... it only contributes to the disenfranchisement and frustration."

Budget cuts show that Louisiana’s state legislature continues to put higher education at the bottom of it’s list of priorities for funding. A budding contentious relationship between students and administration at UL Lafayette has become the result.

SAFETY

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After the debris is put into the container from the street sweeper, it’s hauled off and put at the public works yard in a series of 30-yard dumpsters and it is emptied into the dumpsters.

Then, trucks at Waste Management bring the debris to the landfills.

According to their website, Waste Management provides total resource management for your industrial materials and byproducts. Use the services to see that your waste and/or byproducts are dealt with safely, responsibly and in compliance with all applicable environmental regulations.

The parade route in Lafayette, which runs from Surrey Street to Cajun Field, is where Nepveuax said the main focus during Mardi Gras clean-up is.

As a manager, the task of cleaning up is Nepveuax’s job, joking he doesn’t have a choice, but did add it’s hard work but worth it at the end of the day.

"All year long, we are working to keep the city clean functioning and having it looking as good as possible," Nepveuax said. "Mardi Gras is just another activity for us to put out our best effort."

If you drove out on the streets the day after Mardi Gras, Nepveuax said you can see that his guys working hard for those next few days, even if they have to come up at midnight.

"And that shows that we want to get that done," Nepveuax said, adding, "And we want to get the city back to looking good as possible, so we pride ourselves."

ROY HOUSE

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Looking house and it does have a good story. Its relationship with the university is significant," Thompson said.

History professor Michael Martin, Ph.D., who is the former director of the Center for Louisiana Studies, said the idea to move the center to the Roy House came from the lack of visibility at its current location.

"I started as director in 2011. In 2012, we started discussions with the university for some other place for the center because, where it is now, there’s no visibility and it’s hard to get to," Martin said, adding the move to the Roy House coincided with the UL Lafayette master plan, which was unveiled in 2013.

Martin said the center had to choose between several historic buildings owned by the university before settling on the Roy House.

"The Roy House was that happy medium, where we knew it would take some work, but once the work was done,

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