USL — a big part of Acadiana's future

The school has grown from a small regional institute to the second-largest university in Louisiana, providing about 15,600 undergraduate students with a quality education.

Founded in 1898, the school has grown from a small regional institute to the second-largest university in Louisiana. It not only provides about 15,600 undergraduate students with a quality education, but also serves as a major force for economic diversification. In addition to students from all 50 states, USL attracts about 1,700 international students from 99 foreign countries.

Some recent research with potential for creating jobs include:
- high-tech crawfish ponds using a spiral shape to make year-round harvesting possible;
- a microwave treatment for crawfish meat, possibly extending its shelf-life by several months; and
- a patent on a "biological anti-freeze" discovered in brine shrimp and which could allow longer storage of insulin and other protein-based drugs.

USL astrophysicists Dr. Dan Whitmire and Dr. John Matese were both recognized recently in national publications for the contributions to theories describing a possible, yet undiscovered 10th planet in our solar system. That planet may cause periodic comet showers, which may result in cycles of extinction on Earth every 28 million years.

USL is also expanding physically. In the past year several major building projects were put under way or completed, including a new athletic complex near Cajun Field and a $4.1-million home for the Productivity Center and engineering department. Installation of a new IBM computer and a networking system is also under way.

Students and faculty are still a high priority at USL, which leads all Louisiana universities in devoting the greatest percentage of its budget to academics and the smallest percentage to administration. As a result, USL's 674 full-time faculty members receive salaries which are higher than the national average.

Tuition is $602 per semester for full-time students who are Louisiana residents. Out-of-state students pay $1,277 per semester.

For a small fee, students at USL can cheer on the school's Ragin' Cajun football and basketball teams, which compete in Division I-A. The basketball team, which plays in the Cajundome, frequently competes in post-season tournaments.

Attractive campus

The trees lining the walk leading to USL's Girard Hall are indicative of the university's campus. Planned with the students and faculty in mind, the USL campus is a mix of utility and beauty that makes it among the most attractive in Louisiana.