

The A&M Agenda for Louisiana

Background

As an agricultural and mechanical university, there are significant and inherent responsibilities to the community and states they serve. Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is fortunate to have two world-class A&M universities. Louisiana State University (LSU) and Southern University and A&M College (SU), established in 1853 and 1880, respectively, have a combined 311 years of service to the community and hundreds of thousands of proud and successful graduates. These universities also have systems to which they belong, which reinforces their statewide footprint. However, many of those years have transpired in coexistence and unrealized potential and opportunities. The geographic proximity and years of history of these two A&M institutions provide a singularly unique opportunity across the entire nation. It is critical that the two institutions partner to invest in the community, the people of Baton Rouge, and the entire State of Louisiana. This document, the A&M Agenda, establishes a strategic partnership between LSU and Southern for the future. It will impact generations of graduates to come and secure a prosperous future for Baton Rouge.

Purpose

Providing a shared agenda for Louisiana State University and Southern University that demonstrates a commitment over the next five years to expand the positive and collective impact of the two institutions, in partnership, for our students, Greater Baton Rouge, the State of Louisiana, and the Delta and Gulf Coast regions. The agenda recognizes past efforts, including, but not limited to, the 1981 Consent Decree.

Partnership, Opportunity, and Community

The A&M Agenda describes what is possible when two A&M universities come together to leverage our academic enterprises to yield tangible results for students and our communities. The positive and collective impact can be immeasurable and enduring. While there are numerous benefits of an A&M Agenda, they are broadly organized into three distinct areas: partnership, opportunity, and community. Furthermore, maximizing potential in these areas places a premium on communication, collaboration, and commitment. Increased scope of the first two will extend and strengthen the third and create an environment of increased impact.

Partnership

An essential element of the A&M Agenda is shared opportunities built on mutual respect, appreciation, and trust. This is a historic opportunity to align disciplines, space, people, and partners across a range of responsibilities of an A&M institution. Close partnership in research, discipline development, economic development, workforce development, and shared capacities will enable an environment that produces talent at a world-class level and the outcomes that strengthen our community and state economy.

- ◆ Establish a joint LSU-Southern University Research Advisory Group, composed of campus liaisons, to refine common research interests and focus areas, understand the feasibility of research opportunities, and oversee the implementation of awarded proposals, all of which support the economic development of the state. Opportunities include:
 - Expand collaboration of research and application in the critical fields of artificial intelligence, machine learning, data and computational science, and cyber
 - Extend research collaborations in the areas of agriculture, biomedical, coast and environment, defense and security, and energy
 - Expand joint appointments between LSU and SU agricultural centers, including family and consumer sciences, for research, teaching, and extension
- Jointly pursue NSF grant and designation as a regional center for science and equity
- Expand partnership on major research initiatives, such as the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO)
- Pursue funding from the NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) program, NIH, USDA-AFRI, and other grants to support graduate and undergraduate research opportunities, as well as infrastructure enhancement and capacity building
- Leverage and build upon research that enhances small business development and entrepreneurship
- Explore the opportunity to establish a joint center/institute for the study of culture and society in Baton Rouge
- Expand and incorporate research on learning modalities and instructional differentiation to support faculty development
- Provide support to early-career faculty on proposal writing through a summer institute
- Recommend opportunities for joint faculty appointments in the areas of greatest demand and benefit to LSU and SU Academic Affairs
- ◆ Expand sharing of expertise, programs, education, and research on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- ◆ Expand sharing of expertise, programs, and education on Title IX and Civil Rights
- ◆ Pursue athletic partnerships to enable individual excellence at a national and world-class level

Opportunity

The A&M Agenda also provides a framework for elevating student opportunity and potential. In close collaboration, both institutions can create pathways that are of great interest to the student, great value to the community, and great impact on our state. These pathways will also reinforce the objectives of the partnership described above, to improve economic and workforce development in a positive life-cycle. The following efforts are highlighted.

- ◆ Update and market university agreement on cross-registration and cross-enrollment
- ◆ Inventory current partnerships and opportunities as leverage to pursue new agreements (articulation, MOA) where feasible:
 - Agriculture and Urban Forestry
 - Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
 - Cybersecurity and Defense
 - Education, including laboratory school partnerships and teacher pipelines for areas of greatest need in PreK-12 (Math, Science, English)
- Mass Communication, including collaborative student publication and production
- Nutrition, Health, and Dietetics
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Pre-Vet and Veterinary Medicine
- ◆ From the inventory, establish a minimum of one additional 3+2 or 4+1 pathway program over the next five years for students in the Colleges of Agriculture, Engineering, and Education
- ◆ Establish a minimum of one additional terminal degree pathway program between the institutions
- in the Colleges of Engineering, Science, and Humanities/Law over the next two years
- ◆ Create an A&M annual conference focused on workforce development, workforce-informed pedagogy, internship opportunities, research, and professional placement upon graduation. The conference should also articulate our collective commitment to providing evidence-based solutions to our communities most pressing challenges. The commitments could also support joint proposals to NSF or other groups.

Community

Finally, this A&M Agenda will positively impact the local community, Baton Rouge, surrounding parishes, and the State of Louisiana. With a commitment to service and a belief in the potential of our people, the A&M Agenda will leverage opportunities to bring groups together to benefit from learning, discovery, and service. The following efforts are highlighted.

- ◆ Reinforce programming and collaborations with K-12 to better enable, inspire, and support the successful transition to higher education through the Capital Area Promise and other initiatives
- ◆ Reinforce teacher support, programs, and outreach through the Capital Area Promise and other initiatives
- ◆ Engage and support community leaders for the advancement of social health determinants, including physical environment, education, housing, socioeconomic status, employment, and access to healthcare
- ◆ Fully participate in anti-litter efforts of Baton Rouge and Louisiana as driving members for action and change
- ◆ Continue and enhance support of the city-parish celebrations and service opportunities (i.e., MLK Observance)
- ◆ Take the lead on anti-hunger and health initiatives among student populations through our agricultural centers
- ◆ Improve outreach and support to farmers, particularly young, women, and disadvantaged farmers, in the community and surrounding parishes
- ◆ Expand professional, leadership, and career development for students and recent graduates that aligns with workforce needs and ultimately improves job placement outcomes

Summary

The A&M Agenda's impact will be measured in expanded educational pathways for students, lives changed, and communities strengthened. Again, the power of this Agenda will be unleashed with the elements of communication, collaboration, and commitment and will benefit Louisiana for decades to come. This Agenda will be examined routinely based on the measures in this document and will benefit from continuous dialogue and engagement with Baton Rouge and the local community.

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