



David Diaz recounts his remarkable battle with cancer and his journey back to baseball. —Pg. 4

University seeks out credentials

Corey Drummond
STAFF WRITER

Reaccreditation begins for LSU Shreveport as administration prepares its report for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This process is crucial for students as it determines whether they are allowed federal student aid for attending LSUS. Julie Lessiter, associate vice chancellor of academic affairs, led the process of preparing for reaccreditation. She worked with the heads of each department to develop a detailed report of their policies. "This summer, I did a pre-audit with each of the five entities to go over the standards that were applicable to each group and to look at all of the policies that we have currently in place," Lessiter said. "It was also to see if we needed to add any new policies or to make sure that we are actually implementing everything we need to be compliant with federal standards." The negatives of not being an accredited school are numerous. Without being accredited, students would not be able to receive federal financial aid and credits that acquired would be non-transferrable to other accredited bodies. Students also would not be able to attend graduate school. Dr. John Vassar, vice chancellor of academic affairs, does note the benefits to students attending an accredited school and how it can See CREDIT, pg. 3



Photo by Christopher Talerico

Interim Chancellor Dr. Paul Sisson addresses student concerns during his "State of the U" address.

State of the U peels back curtain

Christopher Talerico
STAFF WRITER

Last Wednesday, Interim Chancellor Dr. Paul Sisson and SGA President Cody King spoke to an audience of around one hundred people about the various changes being made to the way LSUS provides classes and the challenges facing the university. "We are embracing change. We have a history of being innovative. We listen to our students. We listen to our future students. We listen to our community," Sisson said. One of the more contentious subjects

Sisson wanted to impress on the audience was the need to either increase enrollment or increase tuition due to massive budget cuts to higher education on the state level. But not all was doom and gloom. Instead most of the address focused on the ways that LSUS is stepping up to meet those challenges head on and thrive despite the paltry funding subsidized by the state. The lion's share of the presentation focused on the changes in how courses at LSUS were offered. The major changes are a growing catalogue of courses offered entirely online and the shift from semester-length courses

es to the shorter quarter-length courses. "Many of you want to have more classes online or perhaps briefer classes. We've put our M.E.D, Master's of Education, curriculum entirely online this semester. It is one of our programs that is very high quality and very well known. But we noticed more and more students needed the flexibility to take classes whenever they had they time. So we moved it online and in the couple months that that program has been online our enrollment in that program has quadrupled," Sisson said. The increased enrollment through online courses can be a substantial way for LSUS

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Student honors program provides learning, fun



Dr. Linda Webster addresses a classroom of honors students.

Photo by Krista Wilson

Krista Wilson
STAFF WRITER

Do you make good grades and want more from your education at LSU Shreveport? LSUS offers an honors program, geared towards the humanities and social sciences, which may fulfill that need and help students make lasting friendships. The program is designed for students to begin as freshmen and remain in the program while earning their bachelor's degrees. The students in the program get personal tours of the campus. Another thing the honors program classes enjoy are things such as having a word of the day and every time someone says that word he or she must do ten push-ups. "The classes are a replacement for freshmen seminar-we cover everything in

freshmen seminar and then some, because its honors," said Derek Stonic, freshman, biology. "And its not all fun and games, we do quite a bit when we have class, but we have it in a more fun way." Simply earning good grades is not enough to be in the program. Students must enjoy being social and taking part in activities outside of school. "The faculty loves this program because they can come in and talk to you about things that they can't do in their normal classes because they're dealing with a curriculum [in their other classes]," said Dr. Linda Webster, chair of the department of communication. "[The program] might help with the tension, and if incoming freshmen can immediately find a peer group, or support, they're more likely to stay, they're more likely to succeed and they're more likely to enjoy

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College students beware: fake opportunities



Alexandra Meachum

From the Editor's Desk

Walking around the LSU Shreveport campus students may notice a particular flyer offering part-time work with \$15 base pay, directing them to the website: www.workforstudents.com. It may sound like a good opportunity at first but, at least from my experience, it was not.

If you notice, the flyer is vague on job specifications, and lists only a few descriptions such as: flexible hours, customer sales and service, scholarships available, and no experience necessary. The name Vector Marketing is given. You may think “what’s that? I’ve never heard of that business?” Oh, well, there are lots of businesses you’ve never heard of, so you go ahead and tear off the piece of paper with the number to call on it.

Let me stop you right there and save some precious time. DON'T CALL! My freshman year I saw the flyer and, since I was looking for a job at the time, thought I would give it a shot.

I called the number, scheduled an interview, and proceeded to have one of the oddest jobs I’ve ever had. From a group interview instead of an individual one to not finding out what the company actually was and what it sold until after we were “hired,” the whole interview and hiring process still stand out as abnormal to me.

I did learn that Vector Marketing is a sales

company for the product Cutco, a high-end knife and utensil line. The job entails selling knife sets by putting on demonstrations for customers mostly in their homes or a place of meeting. Because workers are considered “independent contractors” making appointments and finding clients is up to them. The \$15 base pay means every demonstration with a customer counts as \$15, plus added commission if you make a sale. Customers fill out an information form and it is taken to the office location, which then is sent off to another location for processing which can take over two weeks. So if you do not make any sales one week, you still have to wait over two weeks for a measly \$15.

It gets even trickier. To start demonstrations you must first purchase a knife set, which is not covered or compensated by the company and cost starts at \$750. The hiring manager told us that since we were now “employees” we were entitled to a discount--our sets would only be \$275. Which is within reason, but when you think about how this job is advertised towards college students, it doesn’t make sense to expect college students to have that kind of spending money. Especially when you interview for a job, you do not expect to pay any out-of-pocket expenses to actually start the job when you haven’t even received the first paycheck.

At the time, I did have the money so I went ahead, bought it and starting making appointments. This is when I found the job to be less than rewarding. The idea of it was not bad, but actually carrying out the work was difficult. Vector Marketing insists it is not a door-to-door business and workers are directed to start out with family and friends as an initial customer base and build off of that. I imagine it is very possible to do such,

but realistically, after you meet with friends and family, a clientele base can become limited.

Also, these knives range from about \$50 to \$300 each and set start at \$750. With many consumers already familiar with popular high-end brands such as Henckels and Wusthof, sold at lower prices in department stores, selling a basically unheard of product at a higher price can be difficult.

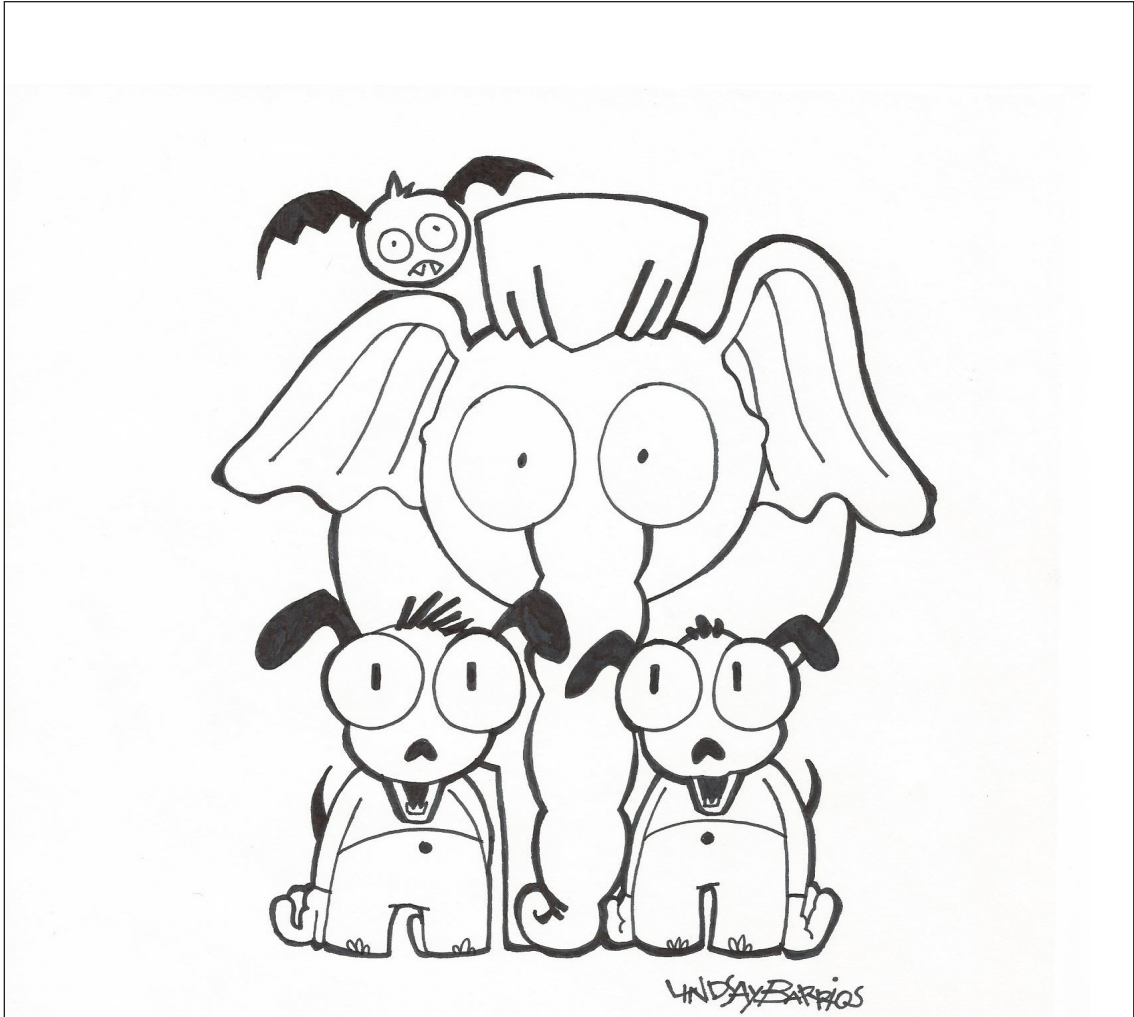
I’m not saying it’s impossible to make money doing this job. If you remain dedicated and persistent, like any job it can pay off. But, in the end, you are not guaranteed a weekly paycheck and may never make the initial \$275 back.

The whole process seemed like a pyramid scheme to me. There is a lot of information online you can find out about the company. Some sites recommend it and provide employees “success stories,” but there are many other sites, especially YouTube videos from former “employees” exclaiming it to be a scam. The company has experienced several lawsuits and been sued numerous times. There is even a group called Students Against Vector Exploitation (SAVE).

Having the money at the time made my experience better than others I read online, and I’ve enjoyed the quality products since. Though I never did come close to making the \$275 back. Also, the local office Vector Marketing was operating out of completely shut down and left town about two months after I was initially hired.

So was it a scam? Maybe, maybe not, or a little of both. But I do recommend students to avoid this company completely. There are many other part-time jobs for college students that are available without any backgrounds in controversy.

Almagest



Stay Tooned

—Lindsay Barrios, junior, fine arts - animation and visual effects



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Students expand horizons, passports

Iris MacLean
STAFF WRITER

Traveling abroad is a popular activity for many college students, and LSU Shreveport provides many opportunities.

College can be the time to expand your horizons and learn as much as possible. Studying abroad is a good way to do so because many schools offer affordable programs that allow students to see the world while earning college credit.

Dr. Timothy Shaughnessy, associate business professor, leads an annual trip to Luneburg, Germany for two weeks between the spring and summer semesters. LSUS partnered with Universitat Luneburg to provide students with an official three-hour credit course immersing students in a new culture.

Students live with German students and get to attend unique classes on European Business taught by German professors. Beyond the classroom students get to travel to Hamburg and Berlin, as well as other places pertaining to academic interest.

“We visit a concentration camp, and a lot of students say it’s not the most fun thing to do, but it’s very interesting and educational. It’s neat to see things like the actual clothing the prisoners wore and see all of the things we have studied about it,” Shaughnessy said.

While trips abroad may seem expensive to a lot of students, in reality they are a great deal. Shaughnessy said going abroad on your own would cost much more because there are no deals. He also said that the value of a school program is much higher because students can earn college credit while seeing the world.

Aside from the Germany trip, the LSUS foreign language department offers students studying French the opportunity to go to Belgium, France, Quebec, or the Maritime Provence’s for a summer or whole year through the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana.

The foreign language department also advertises a study abroad program called Modern Languages Study Abroad, which is the MLSA not directly affiliated with LSUS. This program offers students the opportunity to go to San Jose, Costa Rica, Madrid, Spain, Florence, Italy and Lyon, France.

“I think it was overall a great experience because it gave me an opportunity to see new places,” said Kirsten Howard, public relations, junior.

Howard travelled through MLSA to Madrid, Spain for two and half weeks last summer. Her classes were held at the Complutense De Madrid. She stayed off-campus in dorms



Photo by Iris MacLean
Dr. Timothy Shaughnessy, associate professor of economics

called the Residences of Santa Monica, and had to walk thirty minutes to get to school each day. While there she studied intermediate Spanish.

Howard said she gained a lot by going to Spain because she made many new friends from all over the United States that were in her same position. She also learned a lot of Spanish.

Her fears of going alone, finding her ride at the airport, and making friends were eased once she got there, allowing her to have a great experience. She recommended MLSA to all LSUS students interested in studying abroad for a foreign language.

LSUS also has exchange agreements with several international universities including the University of Mons in Mons, Belgium, the Haaga Institute in Helsinki, Finland, the Chung Yuan Christian University in Chung-Li, Taiwan, the Utkal University in Bhubaneswar, India, and the Berhampur University in Berhampur, India.

The goals of foreign exchange programs are to enhance both institutions academic programs and research projects, as well as increase cultural understanding of students and faculty. The program also encourages trade and business while strengthening ties between both countries.

How do the LSUS numbers measure up?



Photo by Frank Johnson
Kendal Drodgy, a recruiter for the admissions department

Frank Johnson
STAFF WRITER

LSU Shreveport determines it’s standing as a university by calculating a variety of different ratings to evaluate its overall success. Retention, graduation, and admission statistics are measured and then must be reported to the Louisiana Board of Regents. So far the graduation rate is 30 percent, and 65.7 percent retention rate and an 18.5 percent award productivity rate. Some rates are calculated annually while others are calculated every third year, but not all students are counted.

First, graduation and retention rates are two separate metrics. Retention is a metric that only counts first time full-time freshmen beginning their academic career in the fall of a particular year, and they stay continuously enrolled throughout the following fall semester. This is only the first-second-year retention rate, Louisiana schools are also required to report first-third-year retention rates to the Louisiana Board of Regents, which are again only, first-time full-time freshmen that stay continuously enrolled from a particular fall semester until the third fall semester.

Graduation rates are not that different in the calcula-

tions from the retention rates, in which it also tracks the first time-full time students of a particular fall semester, except it tracks them until graduation.

The average time it takes students to acquire their degree at LSUS is 5.8 years according to a third metric calculated by the Louisiana Board of Regents This is really important to remember said Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at LSUS Julie Lessiter.

“Anyone that came as a transfer student is not included in that graduation rate, anybody that started as a part-time student is not included in that graduation rate, anybody who started in the spring semester isn’t counted in that graduation rate,” Lessiter said, “Only if you started in the fall, and if it took you more than six years to graduate, you’re also not included in the graduation rate.”

These two rates are quite misleading to average transfer students looking upon their financial student aid reports, or for parents helping their children pick good schools.

“I see a lot more parent involvement than I do in previous generations, a lot of parents have a lot of questions, but we want to make the parents feel comfortable,” said Kendal Drodgy, a recruiter for the admissions department.

The numbers of students that enroll at LSUS on average are 4500 students in the fall, 4300 in the spring, and 1500 in the summer.

Average parents or students may have difficulties understanding how to place value with all the different rates.

Although some rates may seem low, in the grand scheme of the system the award productivity rate is considered one of the most important.

This rate takes the number of current under graduates and divides it by the number of under graduates who have graduated. This gives a percentage, which if everyone graduated in four years, there would be a 25 percent graduation rate. With that in mind, LSUS has an 18.5 percent award productivity rate.

“LSU Baton Rouge graduation rate is higher than ours, but our award productivity, the actual number of people who come here and graduate is about the same,” Lessiter said.

STATE cont.

to bring in much-needed revenue, rather than raising the tuition of students currently attending. Sisson also reiterated the new option for students to take a shortened eight week “quarter-term” course, offered for the first time this fall.

“Right now, many students are either asking for the opportunity to go through a class at a faster pace, take more classes at one time, [and] possibly finish their degree faster. Some of you, I’m sure, are talking about getting a three-year baccalaureate degree,” Sisson said.

Sisson also expounded on the new courses of study at LSUS.

“I’m sure you’ve heard of our partnership with the Baton Rouge campus where you can get an LSU four year degree if you’re entirely here on this campus or mostly here. It will give you a chance to earn other degrees from other campuses but actually do your work here,” Sisson said. “Some of the most popular ones so far are petroleum engineering, and one that just started this fall is sports administration.”

Sisson also outlined plans to improve LSUS in the future.

“[One plan] is a wellness center...so we’ve been working with the SGA, people in our community, possible finance sources just to work out what do we want this wellness center to be,” Sisson said. There will be fitness and recreation facilities in this wellness center but there will also be some academic aspects to this.”

The State of the U is a way for the student body to be better informed about the current developments with LSUS.

“It was a continuation of Dr. Sisson’s presentation to the faculty and staff that we have at the beginning of every fall semester and he kind of does the same thing and tells everybody what’s going on. So that’s what spread the idea of connecting the student’s with the same information,” said Angel Martin, director of student activities and recreational sports

Sisson had expressed a desire hold this meeting in the past.

“The fact that we need to have faculty, staff, and students aware of everything. I don’t want students to be worried about budgets and policy changes. I just want students to be aware so that they know why we make certain decision. This is really just a part of that effort to make sure that everyone is as fully informed as possible,” Sisson said.

The speakers for the event said they were pleased with how it went.

“It is something we’ll do annually. I see doing this at the start of every academic year. So just laying out a vision of the university and where we’re headed,” Sisson said.

CREDIT cont.

be an assurance to the school’s quality.

“In terms of benefits, the primary one is it provides assurance to students that this institution operates with quality and integrity. One of the big areas of emphasis that SACS has is doing things with integrity. It makes sure that what the institution is saying matches with what the institution is doing. That’s important to all of us internally,” Vassar said. “It’s also helpful for others to see an outside group come in and say ‘Yes, LSUS is providing a quality education.’ I can say that all day long, but to have an outside group come in and emphasize that, it provides that assurance to all of our students that the job being done here is being done well.”

Reaccreditation is a process that major colleges and schools have to go through every ten years. Smaller schools that focus on specific trades typically forgo this process if they do not deem it necessary. The process helps schools stay up-to-date and allows them to consistently improve their foundations.

“It insures that the institution has to take a look at how we have been doing things to make sure we are doing things the best way that we can,” Vassar said.

The reaccreditation process takes multiple years to complete and implement the changes decided by the school. It is important to maintaining and improving the lives of students and the campus as a whole.

HONORS cont.

their college experiences.”

The students are also able to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. The goal is to make the students feel more comfortable speaking with the other students in the program.

“I figured it would give me a better chance and more resources to succeed, I thought that people in honors might actually want to be here,” said Samantha Hunt, freshman, animation and visual effects.

The honors, lounge is an added benefit. The students have unlimited access to the room, providing a place to study while waiting in between classes. It is also a great place to get advice from some of the upper-classmen. A few freshmen said the upper-classmen are more approachable in the lounge and it makes it easier to get help in classes or to learn about the next level of honors classes.

For more information, students can contact Dr. Larry or Dr. Linda Webster.

Pilot pitcher Diaz forces cancer to strike out



Photo courtesy of David Diaz

David Diaz battled two types of cancer in order to return to the baseball field.

Montana Davis
STAFF WRITER

LSU Shreveport baseball is honored with the arrival of their newest pitcher and utility player, David Diaz. He chose to play for LSUS after struggling and ultimately leaving the sport for over a year due to his battle with not one, but two types of cancer.

Diaz, 23, first noticed something was wrong while attending Vernon College, where he developed some arm issues while pitching. Shoulder and arm injuries are very common for ball players, especially pitchers, so it was nothing new for Diaz to handle. However, his arm issues later got to the point he could not play the entire summer after the season.

After playing a season for Vernon, Diaz went on to Cedar Valley. His arm issues progressed, along with the mystery behind them that no doctor could seem to diagnose. He was told it could be neck knots or maybe even Thoracic Outlet Syndrome, certainly nothing physical rehabilitation could not fix.

With no diagnosis, he continued to pitch more than he ever had before, pitching around 100 innings that season.

Finally, the following summer, a frustrated doctor finally conducted a needle biopsy on Diaz to test for cancer. The test came back negative. Still not satisfied with the results, the doctor conducted another biopsy, this time cutting pieces of Diaz's neck and shoulder to test.

After that biopsy, Diaz was diagnosed with Stage-2 Lymphoma and Hodgkin's cancer. Both are forms of cancer in which the white blood cells that form part of the immune system and help protect the body from disease, divide rapidly and live longer than normal cells, eventually forming a tumor. Diaz was immediately sent through more testing.

With an absolutely life-changing summer behind him, Diaz continued to go to school at Tarleton University, not letting the diagnosis prevent him from graduating. After the third week of school, he then began going to chemotherapy--not the usual experience for most college students.

Naturally, Diaz was not allowed to play any sports. Still, he watched and supported his teammates from the dugout. Diaz remained optimistic throughout it all and said that "it was a cool experience but of course, it sucked."

He did not get to touch the field until March 2012.

On December 28, 2012, Diaz said he received the best Christmas present he could ever ask for, the news that he had finally beaten cancer.

On January 22, 2013, Diaz began going to radiation therapy. It was 22 long, straight days of radiation where Diaz said he felt like Hell Raiser, due to having to wear a monstrous face mold during the therapy.

Finally, after what he said felt like an eternity of therapy, he got the clear that he could finally go back to his normal sports routine.

Diaz was on the fast track back to baseball. He passed his conditioning test with ease and began working out again. Everything seemed as if it would finally be back to normal for the young baseball star.

But even though the doctor had given his approval and Diaz's body was healthy again, the new healing process he faced, plus the overwhelming anxiety of cancer returning to his body, turned him into somewhat of a hypochondriac.



Photo by Montana Davis

David Diaz joined the Pilot baseball team in the spring.

Only two short days after his second game for Tarleton, Diaz made the extremely emotional and heartbreaking decision that he would never play baseball ever again.

Quitting baseball forced Diaz to mature and grow like he never expected. He moved back home after finishing the semester and, while trying to figure out what to do next, he decided to enroll in the local community college.

"It was probably the hardest thing I've ever done in my life, going to school and not having a reason to go to school, like playing baseball is 90% why student athletes, baseball players go to school," Diaz said.

While being just a normal student for the first time, Diaz also had students of his own as he took on a job as the site director of an elementary school.

Diaz went on to coach for his old summer baseball team, the Black Hawks. Diaz said coaching form them became his life.

"If I hadn't started coaching I probably wouldn't have come here," Diaz said of his decision to play for the Pilots.

In fact, the Diaz's motivation for returning to playing baseball could be described as something out of a Hollywood sports movie.

"One night, I woke up at four in the morning and I could not go back to sleep. It was the most vivid dream I've ever had in my life," Diaz said. "It was me back at school--I didn't know what school it was--and I was pleading my case on why I can play. I was going on and they were telling me I couldn't play. They were like 'Oh, you quit you can't come back and play anymore'... and I was heartbroken. 'You're not gonna let me play?'"

Diaz recalls an overwhelming feeling he could not shake. He said he thought to himself "there's no way someone's going to tell me what I can't do."

Unable to fall back to sleep, he spent four solid hours emailing coach after coach, asking for a chance, hoping his nightmare would not come true. The next morning, the very first response back was none other than LSUS's own Brent Lavallee, offering him a try-out.

Diaz arrived to LSUS in late March 2013, not necessarily at the peak of his athletic capability. He said that he had to work out and train alone because his friends would be at school and, of course, he couldn't ask his young students to help out.

After nine months of not even picking up a baseball, Diaz went to his try-out with Lavallee. Due to his skills and rigorous training, he was given an offer right on the spot. Without any hesitation, Diaz signed on to become a Pilot.

A month later in Fort Worth, Diaz officially signed on to the LSUS baseball team. Diaz said he is looking forward to being on a team and going to school again, but most importantly he is finally getting back the sport he thought cancer had taken away from him for good.