



Students received a colorful welcome back to the new semester.

—Pg. 3

“HOME IS NOW BEHIND YOU, THE WORLD IS AHEAD.” - J.R.R. Tolkien

Bookstore deducts stress from book buying

Emily Wright  
STAFF WRITER

The staff of the LSU Shreveport Bookstore is helping students use financial aid for textbooks and school supplies through their student IDs. The cost for students’ textbooks can now be deducted directly from the student’s financial aid account.

In addition, there are some new rules for buying and returning textbooks that will offer more flexibility and convenience to students. New merchandise has also been arriving at the Bookstore.

David Dinkins, the assistant director of the LSUS Bookstore, stated in an email interview that financial aid worked out so well in the Bookstore that an extended amount of time was given to the store for financial aid purchases by students. He continued in the email and said that the bookstore began accepting financial aid last August and that the staff is busy trying to make that development as smooth as possible.

“Checks [and] direct deposits will still be released at the same time—this doesn’t add any further delay,” Dinkins said. “[The] financial aid [department] found that they don’t need as much processing time as they expected, so it enables us to keep accepting payments until closer to the actual deadline for sending checks.”

Also, more availability and accessibility has been provided for

See BOOKS, pg. 3



Photo by Corey Drummond

Signs are posted around LSU Shreveport’s campus informing students of the impending move to a tobacco-free campus.

LSUS will return smoke-free

Corey Drummond  
STAFF WRITER

LSU Shreveport prepares to roll out a new, campus-wide smoke-free policy by August of this year.

This summer, both the Senate and the House of Representatives officially passed Louisiana Senate Bill 36 in a nearly unanimous vote. Through this bill, public post-secondary education institutions, like LSUS, are required

to develop smoke-free policies for their campus by Aug. 1 of this year.

The Louisiana Smoke-Free Air Act currently requires schools to be smoke-free, however, college campus outdoors are not affected. Until now, colleges were allowed to make their own policies regarding smoking behavior. Louisiana college campus departments are now writing new policies by order of the Senate Bill 36.

The law allows individual schools to

write unique policies due to the bill’s non-specific guidelines for implementing a smoke-free campus. LSUS is currently deciding how to develop and enforce tobacco restriction.

The question remains if this will involve a ban on non-smoking related products like chewing tobacco and electronic cigarettes. At this stage, LSUS is still working on the specific parameters of the eventual policies and has not made any concrete decisions.

“I think it is still a conversation, an on-

See SMOKE, pg. 3

Athletics’ website gets a new year’s makeover



Photo by Joanna Kresge

According to the new website, the Pilots have become Louisiana’s top winning college basketball program since Coach Chad McDowell began coaching the team.

Carly Dean  
STAFF WRITER

Chad McDowell, athletics director for LSU Shreveport, announced on Dec. 17 the launch of a new website and iPhone app for the department.

The site offers features such as text message and email alerts to keep everyone up-dated on LSUS sports. It has links to all of the information fans could ask for, including news, stats, a fan page, schedules, rosters, and staff information.

“We are extremely excited and pleased with the features of our new site,” McDowell said.

The poll posted on the website at the time of publication shows that 93.5% of voters like the upgrade as well.

“This is just one of the ways we are working to meet the needs of our fan base so that they have convenient access to all of

the latest information available surrounding LSUS athletic teams,” McDowell said.

The app is another of these ways. Headlines from the website are shown on the home screen. The user can then flip through and see recent scoreboards, a staff directory, team rosters, and live media for game coverage.

McDowell, who was in charge of the design of the new website, has been athletic director at LSUS for a year. In 2003, he was hired to head the first men’s basketball team since 1997. According to the website, the Pilots have become Louisiana’s top winning college basketball program since the start of his employment.

Doug Robinson, the former athletic director, hired McDowell for both his previous job coaching at Southwood High School and his current job at LSUS.

“When I was asked to look for a men’s

See SITE, pg. 3

inside	Leadership Academy tackles budget cuts.....	page 2
	Seniors begin gearing up for graduation .....	page 2
	Returning students offer semester tips.....	page 3

An inside look at student government.....	page 3
Students sing in new semester in The Port.....	page 4
Students swarm for chance at gift cards, money ...	page 4





Editorial Policy

The information presented in this publication by no means reflects the opinions of the administration or staff of LSUS. *The Almagest* seeks to provide information for the LSUS campus and community; to involve students, faculty and staff; and to provide a public forum for ideas as guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution. Comments and complaints are welcome and should be addressed to the editor. They must be accompanied by your full name and e-mail address.

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged. However, the staff reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length, and content. Any letter submitted by a club or organization must be signed by all members of the group or by the group's president. Letters should be e-mailed or submitted to the *Almagest* office, BH 344, by 5 p.m. on the Friday preceding the Thursday publication date. Please type the letter and include your classification and major. *The Almagest* reserves the right not to publish submitted materials. Obscene, libelous and anonymous letters will not be printed.

Retractions

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a retraction is a public statement, either in print, or by verbal statement that is made to correct a previously made statement that was incorrect, invalid, or in error. The intent of a public retraction is to correct any incorrect information. *The Almagest* holds all rights if deemed necessary to retract such statements made, and shall, at will. Retraction notices should be made by e-mail or phone.



# Leadership Academy tackles budget cuts

Christopher Talerico  
STAFF WRITER

Members of the Leadership Academy held a presentation Jan. 15 in the Noel Memorial Library to showcase their understanding of the legislative process and what leaders require to push forth new legislation.

Two groups, one organized by Trey Gibson the other by Mary Jarzabek, tackled the subject of higher education budget cuts and presented ideas to help mitigate or even reverse the trend that Louisiana public universities have become quite familiar with.

“This is more of an academic approach to things... Look at problems in higher education today, pick one, and see what you can do to recommend a fix for it,” Gibson said.

The Leadership Academy, created by Gibson, seeks to teach students the skills required to make an impact in their communities, wherever those might be.

The presentation, presented as a competition, was judged by a panel of two: LSU Shreveport Provost Dr. John Vassar and Louisiana House Representative Patrick Williams.

Williams fell into the role of panel judge quite unexpectedly.

“We need to get more leader – young leaders – involved in this process. And so that’s what piqued my interest in being able to take part in this process,” Williams said. “So I could see first-hand what we have to offer because I know there’s so many tremendous brains and [talents] that we have here. We just need to get them more involved in this political process for Shreveport in particular.”

The other judge, Vassar, was already familiar with the academy and is pleased with its progress.

“This has been a growing program for the last few years and I’m excited to see this opportunity to focus on leadership in a more public setting than just a classroom,” Vassar said.

Both groups were allowed give their presentations, which included PowerPoint projects, and



Photo by Christopher Talerico

Dr. John Vassar addresses the Leadership Academy students.

then answered the questions of both the judges and the audience in a Q&A.

Jarzabek, working with biology professor Dr. Stephen Banks, presented an idea that would allow students initially attending a two-year community college to be better advised on the courses they would need and which ones would transfer were they to want to go to a full undergraduate university.

“We really think this is a good idea for the population in Louisiana, especially for students that are considering higher education options in the state. We’re hoping that the legislature looks upon it kindly and we can find an advocate for this legislative action,” Jarzabek said.

Gibson, working with economics professor Dr. Timothy Shaughnessy, decided to “go big, or go home” and presented an approach that called

for the creation of “charter colleges.”

Both plans had their merits and the competition ended in a split decision with Gibson’s group winning the presentation but Jarzabek’s presentation being the most do-able in the current political climate.

Regardless of the “competition,” all participants, and in fact the whole community, are the real winners.

“I think that leadership is a critical necessity for us in this community. Whether you’re talking about political leadership, business leadership or non-profit leadership, we’ve got to get folks in a position where they can effectively lead and transform organizations and then their communities,” Vassar said. “LSUS has been taking the lead in those sorts of programs.”

# Seniors begin gearing up for graduation

Iris MacLean  
STAFF WRITER

Each semester, seniors swell with excitement as they plan to graduate, but first they must undergo a short process before they can walk the stage.

Students planning to graduate must plan a semester ahead in order to get checked out for graduation. The first step is contacting the department chair for the college the student is graduating from. The chair will provide the student with some simple paperwork and from there the department will review the students transcript to ensure they’ve taken all the necessary classes to graduate.

Once a student has a signed checkout form and an application to graduate they are all set to graduate permitting they pass the courses in their final semester.

Julie Thomas, senior, public relations, has been checked out to graduate and plans to walk across the stage this May. Thomas said the check out process was extremely easy and only required her to fill out a few sheets of paper.

“After graduation I hope to attend graduate school at one of the schools I am currently applying to, but of course being a public relations



Photo courtesy of Julie Thomas

Julie Thomas, senior, public relations

student has prepared me with a plan b and c, just in case,” Thomas said.

Many students follow in Thomas’s footsteps and go on to graduate school, while others go straight into the workforce. LSU Shreveport provides students with a career center located on the second floor of the Administration building. LSUS encourages students to utilize this service because it posts jobs and other opportunities upon graduation and provides information on how to do well at interviews and create a good resume.

The graduation ceremony is held at the

CenturyLink Center in Bossier City. Darlenna Atkins, registrar, is in charge of the ceremony and she said it always goes very smoothly because she has a lot of help from other offices and faculty in making it great.

“Graduation is a fun time that we celebrate with our students. We’re proud of their accomplishments and we want to share their experience of completing their undergraduate or graduate degrees,” Atkins said.

Preceding the ceremony alumni host a group reception for students to mingle with faculty they’ve encountered throughout the years and a photographer takes group pictures of each college.

Atkins said there is no rehearsal because they guide students through the ceremony. Students also have access to a graduation packet found on the LSUS website including all information about the ceremony as well as a checklist of things to complete.

The graduation packet can be found by clicking on the “Offices and Services” tab and then going under “Records and Registration”. The packet addresses topics of attendance, assembly, reception, processional, how to dress, photographer, guest seating, and diplomas. Students will also find the graduation application in the packet.



VOLUME LXIV, ISSUE 1

**Staff Writers**  
Malvia Chintakindi  
Carly Dean  
Corey Drummond  
Terrkila Hamilton  
Iris MacLean  
Jennifer Middleton  
Elizabeth Murray  
Ebonie Nelson  
Jannen Pero  
Christopher Talerico  
Emily Wright

**Executive Editor**  
Crystal Vandegriff  
**Managing Editor-Print**  
Alexandra Meachum  
**Managing Editor-Video**  
Zachary Roberson  
**Photo Editor**  
Jessica Ingram

Louisiana State University Shreveport  
Bronson Hall, Room 344  
One University Place  
Shreveport, LA 71115  
phone/fax: (318) 797-5328  
e-mail: [almagest@lsus.edu](mailto:almagest@lsus.edu)  
[www.almagestlsus.com](http://www.almagestlsus.com)





Photo by Jessica Ingram

Will Farmer, junior, computer information systems, advises students to allow plenty of time for parking. This advice seems to be supported by Bronson Hall’s full parking lot.

# Returning students offer semester tips

**Ebonie Nelson**  
STAFF WRITER

Welcome to the start of spring semester! The semester break has come to an end and now it’s time to gear up for a rewarding semester of classes.

Whether you’re new to the college or returning to continue your studies, it might help to take a look at what successful students do to make the grade. Several students provided their suggestion on how they are making the most of their time in college.

“For me the most important thing is to allow time for parking,” said Will Farmer, junior, computer information systems. “Allotting time for parking will ensure that I get to class on time.”

The professor’s name, office location, office hours and preferred method of communication is always important to know. Most professors have this information in there syllabus that’s handed out on the first day.

Also incoming and returning students should be aware about all the campus resources that are available to them.

These resources will benefit your academics throughout the semester.

“Getting some contact information like phone number or email address of at least one student in the class is also a good thing to have,” Farmer said, “in the event you are absent from class.”

For students who feel they need more in-depth help with study problems or life skills, the Student Development and Counseling Center hosts weekly seminars about common problems faced by students and is available for free individual appointments.

This spring semester is full of events and activities for all students. In February, LSUS will host its very own Campus Olympics. It will be held Feb. 10-21. Student Appreciation Days will be March 10-12 and Spring Fling will be April 9-11.

“As a returning student, I just plan on taking care of myself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. That way I can do my best in all my courses,” said Nicole Dunlap, junior, education.

# An inside look at student government

**Malvy Chintakindi**  
STAFF WRITER

Gandhi once wisely said “be the change you wish to see in the world.” The Student Government Association of LSU Shreveport, fondly referred to as the SGA, provides that valuable opportunity to students.

Ever wondered how time well spent can impact masses? SGA is one such example. The SGA is the representative legislative body for students enrolled at the university. The SGA’s mission is to improve student life and facilitate communication among students, faculty and staff.

Believing that students have the right to participate in a significant manner in the operations of the university in order to insure a practical system of self-government, to represent the concerns of the student body, and to promote the general welfare of all students, the SGA has also established a constitution. The constitution contains seven articles which explain the rights and duties of the members along with certain rules to be followed. The SGA is composed of 30 members: President, Vice President, Secretary and 27 Senators elected to represent the entire student body.

The SGA holds the power of being the voice of students studying at LSUS. Since they are the student government, the members strive to bring about necessary changes for the betterment of students. It is because of them that there is a wi-fi facility at the university.

They formulate proposals for bills to be passed which are later addressed by the advisor to deliberate if the proposal is acceptable.

The President presides over all the meetings and forwards all SGA bills and resolutions to the appropriate administrator or organization responsible for implementation.

The Vice President prepares the meeting agenda while assisting the president.

The Senators have the power to determine the interests/concerns of students and draft appropriate legislation.

By a majority vote, the senators may approve bills, resolutions, recommendations and budget appropriations. They can act on all petitions from the LSUS student body,

all matters referred by a SGA committee and approve special elections and referenda.

The SGA also contains standing committees which are – Internal Affairs, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Public Relations and Budget. New members are taken in during the fall and spring semesters through special elections and main elections respectively.

To become a member, a person is supposed to be registered in no less than six hours per semester for credit during the fall and spring semester.

Along with maintaining a good GPA which is 2.0 for undergraduate students and 3.0 for graduate students, he/she should not be on scholastic or disciplinary probation.

To run for the office of SGA president, vice president and executive secretary, a person should have a GPA of no less than 2.5 for undergraduate students and no less than 3.25 for graduate students.

For a better understanding, he/she must have served one year in the Senate immediately prior to the election while being enrolled as a full time student. The Senators will vote during the elections with one vote per person. The SGA Vice President shall have one vote in the Senate, but only in the event of a tie vote. It is a very organized system in an interactive environment.

The incentives for the students to get involved are clear. Not only they can have the power to hold an office at the SGA, they can also draw attention towards problems concerning the students. It gives them a chance to use their position to build a healthy image also setting standards for a quality experience at LSUS. This is also a great platform to socialize. Serving in the SGA helps in building up an attractive resume as well as portfolios. Shortly, it is the three P’s; Presidency, portfolio and power. They are also invited to special SGA events and parties.

Interested students can look for more details on the LSUS home page for the SGA. Thoughtful planning, team work, and commitment make the SGA one of the most functional Organizations on campus. The office is located on the second floor of the University Centre. Seize the opportunity and make the most of it!

## SMOKE cont.

going conversation, and I don’t think we have finalized what it will entail or what the specifics will be,” said Dr. John Vassar, interim provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs.

According to an email notification to LSUS faculty, staff, and adjuncts from Media and Public Relations Director Brooke Rinaudo,”This change has nothing to do with enrollment, retention, or any other policy on campus. We have a committee directing the transition for tobacco free campus. One task taken on by this committee is to develop cessation programs to help faculty, staff, and students.”

Vassar believes there will be many who are pleased with the regulation, but also some that will be regretful at the loss of choice based on prior campus restrictions.

“I think it will certainly lead to a healthier campus overall. I think we all look forward to that. This is the latest in a long line of efforts to make the campus a little healthier and I think people will generally approve,” Vassar said.

Since the passage of the bill, no Louisiana higher education institutions have made any claims against Louisiana Senate Bill 36.

“Part of our job as a state entity is to implement policies made by governing agencies including the state legislature. We are restricted from lobbying in different ways,” Vassar said.

According to the United Health Foundation, in 2012 Louisiana ranked 49 among the state health rankings. In response to an increase in cardiovascular health problems stemming from smoking, some states are already moving to ban all forms of tobacco products from college campuses.

The states Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Iowa each require all state-supported institutions to be tobacco free. As of Jan. 2 this year, 1,182 college campuses were smoke free.

## SITE cont.

basketball coach to start our program, I went and got Coach McDowell again. He is a leader, and I knew what kind of job he would do,” Robinson said.

McDowell looks forward to “helping LSU Shreveport grow.”

## BOOKS cont.



Photo by Julie Thomas

students enrolled in eight-week courses, so there have been a few small changes to the purchasing and returning of textbooks for these courses.

“If students choose to buy their B-term books early, they will still have until the end of the first week of their class to return their books,” Dinkins said in the email. “Also, we have changed when we begin returning unsold books to publishers—now we typically wait until early April ... or November ... before doing textbook returns. We used to do them ... in February or September. This enables B-term students to get their books when classes start, if they’d rather not purchase them early.”

The Bookstore has more merchandise coming into the store this semester to appeal to students. Merchandise includes t-shirts, shorts, tops, Nike and Greek items, as explained by the Bookstore Director, Brenda Bartlebaugh.

“We’re constantly getting in new merchandise and trying to give [students] new options,” Bartlebaugh said.

One of the major draws for students is the Bookstore’s large choice of food items.

“We have actually expanded our snack area a lot, even for some lunch items,” Bartlebaugh said. “I’m constantly trying to bring [in] new snacks and [also] change snacks and drinks to let the students have a good selection.”

Moreover, the bookstore also has the choice for students to buy e-books. Many e-books offer study aids, apps, and other educational functions to assist students.

Neketra Pipkins, a cashier for the Bookstore, said there is the option of choosing an e-book rather than a traditional book. She said that while there are many non-traditional students along with traditional college students who prefer to be able to hold their textbook in their hands, the e-book option would appeal more to the technological savvy student. She said she believed that the e-book would be expanding for even more convenience for students.

Bartlebaugh said that the Bookstore is still offering 10 percent off purchases made in the store every first and third Wednesday of the month for students wearing LSUS t-shirts or other merchandise.





Photo by Elizabeth Murray

Karaoke Common Hour attracted several students willing to show off their vocal talents, or lack thereof.

# Students sing in the new semester in The Port

Elizabeth Murray  
STAFF WRITER

The Student Activities Board of LSUS hosted karaoke during Common Hour on Wednesday to kick off the new semester. Students in The Port kept a watchful eye on the stage while talking with their peers as the entertainment was getting ready to begin.

“We decided to do this as like a welcome back thing-try to bring some more student life into LSUS,” said SAB member Arnold Merry, senior. “Just have a good time, that’s what it’s all about.”

A small yet excited crowd of students quickly formed around the microphone to sort through the list of songs available to be preformed.

As the entertainment was about to begin, students in the port began to quiet their conversations, get their camera phones ready, and look towards the microphone.

The talent seen in the UC port ranged from pitch perfect to comically off-key. The karaoke show opened up with

a classic, “Baby Got Back” by Sir Mix-A-Lot performed by one of the SAB members, who not only sang but also gestured intensely with the words of the song. Students in The Port seemed to really enjoy his performance and gave him a loud round of applause.

With their backs to the crowd, karaoke performers looked to the projector screen to sing along with their chosen song. Many of the performers never looked back at the crowd during their performance, but diligently followed the words changing from white to bright green on the projector.

“I sing karaoke all the time, generally in bars. I think it was cool,” said Rebecca Dubois, freshman, smiling. “This is only my second semester, and I’ve never seen this happen before.”

Dubois performed “Don’t Speak” by No Doubt with great preciseness.

Outside of The Port, Dubois’ favorite place to perform karaoke is downtown at Blind Tiger on Wednesday and Sunday nights.

Following Dubois, a student performed “Set Fire To

The Rain” by Adele. The male student was tall and thin with black-framed glasses. With his back hunched and his hands on the microphone, the student was able to successfully sing the entire song one octave below Adele with a slight country accent- throwing his fist in the air every time he sang “I set fire.” This was a karaoke perfect performance. The student received a wild round of applause for this performance.

Another student performed an emotionally charged “Killing Me Softly” by Lauryn Hill. The student’s whisper yet precise pronunciation of the lyrics gave The Port a hauntingly beautiful atmosphere. Students in The Port remained virtually silent during the performance.

“I enjoy hearing people who aren’t the best singers sing fun songs for fun,” said Kelly Scaife, a junior who is majoring in Sociology. “To me, people that sing really well kind of ruin karaoke for the rest of us. It’s about having fun, not showing off- well maybe a little showing off,” Scaife said with a chuckle. Although Scaife said she would not be performing in The Port, she said her favorite karaoke song is “Friends in Low Places” by Garth Brooks.

# Students swarm for chance at gift cards, money

Alexandra Meachum  
MANAGING EDITOR-PRINT

Bingo night brought students out to the UC Port last Thursday evening to play for a chance to win free gift cards to local stores and restaurants.

Using large, colored permanent markers participants stamped their bingo cards while members of the Student Activities Board called out numbers that were attached to ping-pong balls rotating inside a raffle machine and chosen at random.

“We’ve never had a turnout like this before,” said Keke Ellis, senior, sociology. Ellis described the event as a tradition for Week of Welcome at LSU Shreveport, but this bingo night brought out the biggest attendance she had ever seen.

Director of Recreational Sports Angel Martin said she thinks the turnout was due to a change in the time the event was held.

“The SAB has tried holding events like this at different times, some at 6 p.m. and some earlier, but having it at 5 p.m. seems to work best with students’ schedules and night classes,” Martin said.

The SAB sponsored the event and purchased the gift cards, each containing \$25 to use at places such as Carabba’s, Game Stop, Target, and Chili’s.

Around 4:30 p.m. students started to stagger one-by-one into The Port and by 5:00 p.m. groups of five and more hustled to grab remaining tables. The tables were full reaching from one side of the room to the next. When no more tables were left students took to the couches using the small tables as a surface to mark their cards on. As students began to settle and relinquished energized chatter...the bingo game began.

“G23...I58...074...” called out a member of the SAB. The first round only got to about the sixth number when someone shouted “Bingo!”

The night’s first winner was Brian Gordon, junior, biology and he chose to take home the gift card to Buffalo Wild Wings.

“I feel great and really like this event!” Gordon said,



Photo by Jessica Ingram

Students listened carefully to the numbers being called.

having to yell over the growing noise of the crowd.

G52...O24...I32...the numbers continued, this time taking much longer to get to a bingo.

Reid Kerr, senior, general studies commented before the game began that he was feeling lucky and wore his suit and tie as his “lucky bingo suit.” Finally after a sequence of almost 20 numbers being called out, a bingo was shouted out and Kerr was the one shouting. After his card was confirmed by a SAB member, he walked up to the podium and chose the Outback card.

“I’m super happy and knew this suit would pay off!” Kerr said. “I think it’s my green tie, green is a lucky color.”

Kerr’s claimed luck appeared to be real when a girl sitting right next to him yelled out bingo the very next round.

“We’re not cheating,” jokingly said Courtney Hilborn, freshmen, community health, as she walked up to claim her Starbucks gift card.

“I guess there was something to Reid’s lucky outfit and

I’m excited because I love a good frappuccino,” Hilborn said.

The game continued to last as the sun went down leading to several more wins.

“This is the first time I’ve been to one of these bingo nights and I think it’s pretty cool,” said Timothy Hensel, sophomore, elementary education. Hensel said his want to become more involved in student-life brought him out that evening.

Martin said the next bingo game will be held during Spring Fling and will be for groceries instead of gift cards.

“The bags are themed, such as a healthy foods bag, popcorn and movie bag, and the students can pick from what they like,” Martin said. “From the way 5 p.m. seemed to bring out the most people I think we’ll probably have it at that time again.”

Whether prizes are gift cards or groceries the students seemed happy to a part the event and the SAB received a record turnout for their contribution.