

FORWARD

First and foremost, it should be acknowledged that over 100 people – from academics to industry to community members – contributed to the initial work conducted by way of 11 workgroups to assess the current state of this transition and to make recommendations based on their respective fields of expertise. A great deal of time and energy went into conducting analyses and forming the following goals and recommendations, and the Transition Executive Committee is immensely grateful for that effort.

The workgroup recommendations were thoughtful and detailed, yet the reader of this document will find that the information presented here is a balance between high-level and detailed, due to the amount of information being synthesized for this comprehensive report. Please rest assured that very specific steps were documented within the recommendation submissions, some of which have already come to fruition at the time of writing this forward.

Additionally, after the month of January 2026, more detailed market information that can affect future decisions for academic programming and staffing, facilities usage, and financial management of UNO will be available to complement or correct these initial assessments. More specifically, those include two external assessments and the enrollment data for the Spring 2026 semester at UNO. Once that information is available, it will be possible to determine the current cash position of UNO and enable leadership to develop more concrete plans and next steps in preparation for the Louisiana Legislative session, which begins in the month of March.

The reader will also note that there is one workgroup not included in this initial report simply due to timing, and that group's assessment will be forthcoming in the new year. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

With gratitude,
Jeanette R. Weiland, Transition Administrator

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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisiana's decision to transition the University of New Orleans (UNO) into LSU New Orleans represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to stabilize a financially distressed institution, modernize its operations, rebuild enrollment, and position it as a high-performing, future-ready urban campus aligned with the state's flagship system that will attract expatriates to the state and grow the economy. Combining the brand equity of LSU with that of New Orleans, could be the most catalytic economic development project that the city of New Orleans has seen in decades. However, a transformation of this magnitude will require steep financial investment and strong leadership. This report synthesizes the work of eleven transition workgroups and preliminary external financial assessment findings to present a clear, prioritized roadmap for achieving that vision.

LSU New Orleans will inherit an institution with longstanding structural financial challenges. Tuition revenue is a university's most significant revenue stream, and at UNO, declining enrollment coupled with long-term administrative mismanagement remains the most influential driver of UNO's financial instability. LSU New Orleans must implement an aggressive, data-driven enrollment strategy that prioritizes academic program alignment, digital marketing, online program expansion, student experience modernization, and retention improvement. Enrollment is not simply a metric; it is the university's core revenue engine, and its revitalization is essential to long-term sustainability.

The transition also requires rapid modernization of enterprise systems. The Workday platform, currently implemented inconsistently at UNO, must be rebuilt to LSU standards to ensure accurate billing, registration, financial aid processing, and reporting – as well as provide a dependable HR platform for employees. Unfortunately, the university faces an estimated \$46.1 million in necessary IT and digital infrastructure upgrades, including WiFi modernization, access control, cybersecurity, and classroom technology to meet the needs of a competitive university and to properly manage finances moving forward.

Facilities and real estate assessments reveal more than \$3 million in near-term repairs to student housing alone, along with substantial needs across academic, student life, and auxiliary facilities. Strategic capital investments in assets such as the School of Hospitality, Lakefront Arena, and the Engineering Complex, are necessary for academic competitiveness and industry alignment, while broader campus planning – including wayfinding and signage updates – will be essential to reflect the LSU New Orleans identity. Specific investment amounts needed for deferred maintenance and capital improvements will be available after the State of Louisiana conducts its deferred maintenance assessment in early 2026. Additionally, a current facilities usage assessment has been enlisted, and the findings will be ready by the end of January 2026.

Academics must also undergo significant modernization to meet the expectations of contemporary learners. A forthcoming external academic assessment will provide market-driven data that informs what direction and fine-tuning academic programs require. Taking enrollment growth projections and the forthcoming academics assessment into account, the facilities usage assessment will inform how best to utilize current real estate assets in the short, mid, and long-term timeframes; this will keep immediate needs at the forefront while reserving room for aspirational growth goals based on future enrollment targets.

Additionally, Student Services must also undergo significant modernization to keep up with current day expectations of tuition-paying students. The Student Services workgroup identified numerous staffing needs; however, many routine advising, registrar, bursar, and financial aid tasks can be – *and should be* – automated through AI-enabled systems to run a responsive and efficient service enterprise. These tools allow human staff to focus on complex cases, holistic student support, and high-impact interventions. These tools will also enable LSU New Orleans to scale services without proportionally increasing labor costs.

Finally, LSU New Orleans must adopt governance, HR, and policy structures that match LSU System standards. Alignment in procurement, benefits, finance, research compliance, and academic policy will ensure consistent operations, reduce institutional risk during the transition, and provide opportunities for economies of scale when it comes to the expense side of the operation.

Taken together, the findings and recommendations in this report provide LSU leaders, policymakers, and campus stakeholders with a beginning path forward. By the end of January 2026, LSU should receive the abovementioned additional external assessments that will form a more complete picture of what is needed and can further guide next steps. Furthermore, after January 2026, Spring enrollment data will be solidified and the results of such will determine how much tuition revenue was collected for Fall 2025 and how much is expected for Spring 2026. This information will inform stakeholders as to the expected cash position of UNO at the end of the fiscal year.

Through disciplined financial management, enrollment growth, digital transformation, modernization of student support, targeted capital investment, and alignment with LSU System standards, LSU New Orleans can emerge as a strong, self-sustaining, and competitive institution that serves the region and the state with excellence. LSU leaders have already stepped up to lend their time and expertise to making this transition a success, however, the immediate challenge will be finding the financial resources required to execute the vision and establishing a highly competent leadership team on the ground in New Orleans to deliver results.

SECTION 2: PRIORITY FRAMEWORK

STABILIZE → STRENGTHEN → TRANSFORM

OVERVIEW

This Priority Framework establishes the strategic sequencing required for LSU New Orleans to achieve financial stability, operational reliability, enrollment growth, and long-term institutional transformation. Each phase builds on the previous one, forming an interdependent structure that ensures resources and leadership attention are focused where they are most urgently needed. Stabilization must precede strengthening, and strengthening must precede transformation. This ordering is not optional; it is structural; without Phase 1 (Stability), Phase 2 (Strength) cannot be achieved, and without Phase 2 (Strength), Phase 3 (Transformation) is not possible.

PHASE 1: STABILIZE (Immediate) - Focuses on restoring financial control, operational accuracy, and foundational systems that directly affect students, cash flow, and institutional credibility.

Key Priorities:

- Strengthen receivables and collections processes to reduce outstanding balances and stabilize cash flow
STATUS: *In process, with measurable improvements to date (as of December 2025)*
- Identify high-risk facilities issues that have immediate impacts on safety, housing, and student life
STATUS: *In process, with final private and state-ordered assessments forthcoming in January/February 2026, while LSU leadership is reviewing leases and management agreements for on-campus housing*
- Launch LSU New Orleans branding and external positioning strategies
STATUS: *In process, with an immediate need for funding to cover marketing assets such as website edits and builds*
- Establish LSU System-aligned HR, finance, and policy structures
STATUS: *In process, with an ETA of process compliance starting July 1, 2026*
- Fix Workday Student workflows to ensure accurate billing, registration, and financial aid processing
STATUS: *In process; preliminary assessments are complete and pending funding approval, an ETA for newly built student instance integrated within LSU system and fully operational in September 2027 to align with financial aid deadlines*
- Modernize essential IT systems to support all administrative operations
STATUS: *In process; preliminary assessments/walk-throughs by LSU are complete and pending funding approval, an ETA for all accounting/finance/HR instances being operational on July 1, 2027 to align with fiscal year budgeting*

PHASE 2: STRENGTHEN (Years 1 - 2) - With foundational systems stabilized, LSU New Orleans can focus on strengthening academic relevance, student experience, and enrollment performance. Phase 2 builds institutional competitiveness that supports sustainable enrollment and revenue growth.

Key Priorities:

- Align academic programs with workforce needs and regional economic priorities
- Launch AI-enabled student success tools that reduce manual workload, improve response times, and establish an operational infrastructure poised for growth
- Expand enrollment pipelines through LSU Online, targeted marketing, and high-yield transfer partnerships
- Enhance student life environments and support structures to improve persistence
- Increase research readiness and industry partnership capacity

PHASE 3: TRANSFORM (Year 2 - 5) - Once stabilized and strengthened, LSU New Orleans can pursue long-term institutional transformation.

Key Priorities:

- Deliver major capital improvements such as the Hospitality, Recreation & Tourism facility, Engineering Complex modernization, and Lakefront Arena renovations
- Implement a fully AI-enabled campus ecosystem
- Expand research, innovation, and economic development initiatives that include real estate developments that incorporate university needs such as student housing
- Develop long-term enrollment and workforce alignment projection models

SECTION 3: FINANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES

Led by: Chad Brackin and Clay Jones

OVERVIEW

The recent Alvarez & Marsal draft financial assessment of UNO's current state identifies over \$2 million in emergency facilities repairs in FY24–25 and a total deferred maintenance backlog of \$59 million. While facilities issues are addressed in Section 5, these findings have direct financial implications: escalating emergency costs strain liquidity, reduce budgeting flexibility, and underscore the need for strengthened forecasting models.

The audit further confirms longstanding weaknesses in UNO's financial controls, including untimely reconciliations and inconsistent receivables practices. These findings reinforce the urgency of LSU New Orleans' transition into LSU's instances of Workday, which will standardize accounting, automate compliance workflows, improve audit readiness, and reduce error rates tied to manual processes. Financial stabilization is the first and most essential prerequisite for the transition.

Therefore, strengthening financial and HR IT systems is fundamental to creating the reliable operational backbone necessary for LSU New Orleans to stabilize and grow. Correcting receivables leakage, modernizing Workday functions, and aligning HR processes will significantly reduce compliance risks and improve financial predictability. Additionally, integrating AI-enabled faculty, staff, and student support tools will reduce manual workload and redirect human staffing energy toward high-value employment and academic advising, enrollment growth, and student retention. The Finance & HR workgroup's most pressing goals are outlined below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Finance & Workday High-Level Stabilization Tasks & Timelines

Goal	Key Tasks	Lead / Partners	Timeline	Status	Dependencies
Goal 1: Contracts & AP Review	Review major contracts Assess AP aging Analyze old invoices Negotiate renewals Evaluate debt service	CFO; Procurement; Legal	Dec 2025 - Mar 2026	In process	System procurement; Contract database
Goal 2: Receivables & Rate Review	Review \$55M receivables Address \$12.5M >1 yr delinquent Identify collection barriers Update doubtful accounts Review tuition & fee rates	CFO; Bursar; Enrollment Mgmt	Jan - Apr 2026	Planned	Workday Student; Collections policies
Goal 5: Workday Financial & HR Transition	Identify hardware needs Prepare Workday transition budget Coordinate HR/Finance/Student modules Align GL, AP, Procurement, Payroll	CFO; HR; LSU A&M Workday Team	2026 - 2027	Planned	HR alignment; IT infrastructure

FINANCE

The immediate objective within financial administration activities at UNO is to maximize timely receipt of tuition, grants, and other receivables and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements for collection and write off. At the same time, the financial team must correct past poor practices so that moving forward, the same issues do not reappear.

Student Accounts Receivable

As of December 2025, UNO held approximately \$2.9 million in outstanding student receivables. Earlier in the year, this number exceeded \$5 million, reflecting chronic under-collection patterns associated with system errors, manual processes, and misaligned billing workflows inside Workday Student. While improvements have been made, that specific item's remaining balance still represents significant tied-up liquidity.

Root causes of outstanding receivables include:

- Delayed or inaccurate student billing due to Workday configuration issues
- Registration holds not clearing automatically
- Insufficient early-term communication to students regarding balances and consequences
- Manual collection processes with limited automation support enabling human error or lack of action

Impact on Operations:

- Students are (were) allowed to register for classes despite having unpaid tuition bills from previous semesters
- Reduced available operating cash that led to deferred urgent facilities repairs and other shortfalls
- Inhibited ability to fund instructional and student support services

In addition to student receivables, the Alvarez & Marsal audit identifies approximately \$55 million in total outstanding receivables, including \$12.5 million more than one year old, federal reimbursements, and past-due grants – all underscoring the magnitude of historical under-collection and the need for systemic reform.

STATUS: *UNO and LSU finance teams are collaborating to support implementing structured collection timelines, automated notifications, accurate billing via Workday, and improved cross-department coordination. LSU System financial practices will be implemented post-transition period and will be fully automated when Workday functionality is operational starting July 1, 2027 assuming that funding for Workday implementation is provided. HOWEVER, given the anticipated shortfalls, it is suggested that starting immediately, a process is established to anticipate cash-flow and is monitored and reported as budget-to-actuals on a monthly basis.*

Cash Flow Constraints

Declining enrollment has reduced tuition revenue by an estimated \$3 million for Fall 2025 alone. While transitional support from the LSU System will stabilize operations, sustained financial health depends on rebuilding enrollment and strengthening receivables practices.

Cash Flow Risks:

- Decreased ability to maintain safe and functional facilities
- Inability to proactively invest in high-demand academic programs
- Increased deferred maintenance costs
- Greater vulnerability to unexpected emergencies

Contract and Revenue Alignment

Alvarez & Marsal estimates that preventable revenue losses from contract mismanagement and delayed federal reimbursements account for approximately:

- \$1M Chartwells withholding
- \$1M+ in missed solar tax credits
- \$500K+ in delayed federal refunds
- \$700K+ in aged grants

AND uncalculated additional exposure. Combined, these preventable revenue gaps represent millions in lost or delayed cash flow each fiscal year, materially worsening UNO's liquidity challenges. Reestablishing these revenue flows will be an immediate priority under LSU New Orleans, supported by LSU contracting standards and centralized oversight.

STATUS: *UNO and LSU financial and facilities leadership are currently engaging with outside vendors to help collect current receivables and renegotiate contracts. The findings of the external audit by Alvarez & Marsal are the baseline for assessment, with January 2026 enrollment numbers and tuition bill collections completing the picture for a projected cash position at the end of the current FY.*

Workday Financial and Student Systems

Workday serves as the backbone of financial, HR, and student operations across the LSU System. UNO's Workday's integration/migration is mission-critical because errors in this system directly generate receivables problems, audit findings, delayed aid, and student dissatisfaction. LSU's Workday expertise will accelerate UNO's transition to an accurate and fully compliant configuration.

Missing Workday implementation milestones would extend operational instability and delay the university's ability to scale enrollment, improve cash flow, and ensure audit readiness, and that work is dependent upon funding; the needs of which are outlined in the IT & Systems section.

STATUS: *Migration and build for integrated systems should begin no later than April 2026 dependent upon Workday agreeing to a bridge contract to start the work with a deposit before the Louisiana Legislature potentially provides funding for this essential need. If funding is secured, then the financial module alignment should be fully operational July 1, 2027.*

HUMAN RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

UNO's HR environment requires modernization to align with LSU System policies, ensure compliance, and support organizational restructuring. HR stabilization is foundational because it affects hiring, compensation, benefits, onboarding, and the university's ability to deliver reliable student and employee services.

Alignment with LSU System HR Policies

As UNO becomes LSU New Orleans, all HR policies - including classification, compensation, benefits, and employee relations - must transition to LSU System standards. This alignment ensures:

- Consistent employment practices across campuses
- Compliance with state and federal requirements
- Accurate payroll and benefits administration
- Clear position control and organizational clarity

STATUS: *HR alignment will occur in coordinated phases ahead of and alongside Workday Financial completion and organizational restructuring. With adequate funding, Finance and HR instances in Workday are on track to be fully operational and integrated into the LSU system effective July 1, 2027. In the meantime, all LSU employees are a part of a centralized fringe benefits system that is operated by the A&M campus. This includes participation options in LSU First Health Insurance Plan as well as all other ancillary fringe benefits plans (i.e. dental, life, vision, etc.). This also includes the operation of LSU's Supplemental 403B program which is run by an Investment Committee for all the campuses. LSU New Orleans campus employees will enter these programs on July 1, 2026, regardless of whether they are fully integrated into the Workday tenant LSU operates.*

Payroll, Position Control, and Organizational Structure

LSU New Orleans must:

- Evaluate organizational structures and recreate as needed to fit within the LSU System and meet the needs of an infrastructure poised for growth
- Correct position data (within Workday) to match the LSU Enterprise
- Modernize onboarding and offboarding workflows
- Strengthen record-keeping, processes, and audit compliance

AI-Enabled Workforce Support and Administrative Modernization

AI tools will provide LSU New Orleans with opportunities to modernize administrative processes, reduce manual workload, and improve accuracy and compliance. These tools should be considered when forming restructured org. charts. Examples of AI capabilities include:

- Automated employee onboarding and training workflows
- AI-supported payroll accuracy checks
- Predictive analytics for staffing needs and budgeting
- Automated policy guidance and HR inquiry responses

STATUS: *These tools allow HR human teammates to focus on higher-impact responsibilities such as talent management, organizational development, and employee engagement and are being reviewed for consideration for integration into Workday instances at the LSU Enterprise level.*

SECTION 4: ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Led by: Kappie Mumphrey

OVERVIEW

Enrollment is the primary revenue lever for the university. The Administrative Leadership and Enrollment Management workgroup recommendations focus on building a modern Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) model that integrates planning, analytics, technology, and coordinated execution across recruitment, retention, and graduation outcomes.

Rather than incremental adjustments, the workgroup emphasized the need for a best-in-class enrollment operation that aligns academic offerings, marketing, student services, and data systems around clearly defined enrollment targets. The sequencing of recommendations reflects an understanding that enrollment growth must be addressed immediately to stabilize revenue and support broader transition initiatives.

Table 4.1 – Strategic Enrollment Management Goals

Goal	Description	Key Actions	Timeline
Develop Comprehensive SEM Plan	Establish a university-wide SEM framework	Engage SEM consultant; define enrollment targets; align units	Immediate - April 2026
Strengthen Enrollment Leadership	Build leadership capacity to execute SEM strategy	Establish SEM leadership roles and governance	Immediate
Modernize Enrollment Operations	Redesign recruitment and retention processes	Standardize workflows; integrate CRM and analytics	6 - 18 months

Table 4.2 – Enrollment Investment Requests and Intended Outcomes

Investment Area	Estimated Cost	Purpose	Intended Outcome
SEM Consulting Support	\$70,000	Design SEM model and roadmap	Clear enrollment targets
Enrollment Staffing and Capacity	\$400,000	Support recruitment and retention	Improved yield and persistence
Enrollment Growth Initiatives	\$1.5 million	Expand recruitment and delivery capacity	Sustained enrollment growth

Enrollment Operations and Technology Enablement

The workgroup emphasized the importance of leveraging data, technology, and predictive analytics to support enrollment decision-making. Modern enrollment systems are enablers of real-time insight into applicant behavior, student progression, and retention risk.

Table 4.3 – Enrollment Systems and Data Capabilities

Capability	Description	Application	Timeline
CRM and Predictive Analytics	Model enrollment trends and outcomes	Improve targeting and retention interventions	6 - 12 months
Online Program Enablement	Expand online and flexible delivery	Increase enrollment capacity	By Fall 2026

Sequencing, Dependencies, and Institutional Impact

The enrollment recommendations are intentionally sequenced to align planning, investment, and execution. Early emphasis on SEM design and leadership enables downstream investments in technology, staffing, and program delivery.

Enrollment Management is positioned as the central mechanism through which LSU New Orleans stabilizes revenue and advances toward a sustainable future. By implementing a coordinated SEM strategy supported by leadership, data, and technology, the university can reverse enrollment declines and strengthen its competitive position. However, that must begin now, and investment is needed to fund this crucial activity.

SECTION 4: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & SYSTEMS

Led by: Craig Woolley

Information Technology (IT) is the operational backbone of LSU New Orleans and underpins every academic, financial, HR, and student-facing function. The ability to stabilize operations, support enrollment growth, and ensure fiscal integrity depends on modern, reliable, and secure IT systems. Workday transition readiness, infrastructure modernization, cybersecurity alignment, and staffing capacity are immediate priorities requiring coordinated and deep investment.

UNO's inherited systems reflect decades of deferred maintenance and are woefully outdated. Mission-critical infrastructure - including network switches, WiFi, cabling, firewalls, device fleets, and classroom technology - must be replaced or upgraded to meet LSU System standards and to achieve the level operational and financial performance needed for the campus' growth and self-sustainability. These upgrades are also necessary to deliver a competitive student experience, execute Workday configuration, and ensure regulatory compliance. Much of the existing wired network infrastructure is over 15 years old. All of the critical IT infrastructure on campus is past its useful life and must be replaced.

The IT and Systems Workgroup has identified 5 critical goals that must be addressed for the move to be successful as illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – IT & Systems Goals Summary

Goal	Key Tasks	Lead / Partners	Timeline	Dependencies
Goal 1	Prepare Workday hardware Finalize Workday budget Support configuration	IT; CFO; LSU A&M Workday Team	2025 - 2027	Infrastructure; staffing
Goal 2	Modernize network core Switching & routing upgrades WiFi modernization Cabling replacement	IT Infrastructure	2025 - 2026	Funding; procurement
Goal 3	Upgrade cybersecurity Firewalls Identity & authentication systems	IT Security	2025 - 2026	Network stability
Goal 4	Modernize classrooms VOIP Access control Printers	IT; Facilities	2025 - 2027	Capital funding
Goal 5	Deploy AI infrastructure GPU systems Cyber range replacement Data center upgrade	IT; Research	2026–2027	Data center upgrades

IT modernization also includes cybersecurity, identity and access management, AI infrastructure readiness, physical security systems, and data center resilience. This transformation will require an analysis of the UNO IT staffing levels and structure, which includes one of the abovementioned goals. The team provided estimated

costs for Goals 1,2, and 5, yet these are high-level budgetary estimates, and more detailed information will be available by February 2026.

The cost of Workday transition alone, is documented at \$13,499,500. Hardware readiness, data cleanup, identity management, network stability, and ERP-capable staffing are critical dependencies without which Workday cannot be successfully configured or launched. Collectively, UNO requires \$46,185,000 in technology investment to stabilize operations and align with LSU System expectations as illustrated in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 – IT Modernization Investment Summary*

Category	Line Item Detail	Cost
Workday Implementation	ERP transition costs	\$13,499,500
AI-Enabled Network Switching & Routing	Core routers, distribution & edge switches, licensing	\$8,994,000
AI-Enabled WiFi 7 Infrastructure	Indoor & outdoor APs, licensing	\$3,012,500
AI-Enabled Video Surveillance (NVR + Cameras)	Recorders, analytics, cameras, licensing	\$1,350,000
Endpoint Computing	2,500 units	\$3,000,000
Cybersecurity	Bluecat DDI, firewalls, identity, authentication	\$1,099,000
Cabling Infrastructure	Cat6A building cabling & fiber	\$8,035,000
Classroom Technology	105 rooms	\$1,575,000
Access Control	42 buildings	\$1,050,000
Server/Data Center	Virtual hosts, power backup, monitoring	\$540,000
AI Infrastructure	GPU systems, cyber range, data center upgrade	\$3,000,000
VOIP Upgrade	VOIP infrastructure	\$120,000
Printer Infrastructure	Print management units	\$910,000
TOTAL		\$46,185,000

On the next page is an itemized list further explaining the above estimates to conclude the IT & Systems section.

IT & SYSTEMS DETAILED ESITMATES

Workday Estimate (Goal 1)			
Workday implementation for moving UNO into LSU			\$ 13,499,500
Infrastructure Estimate (Goal 2)			
AI Enabled Network Switching & Routing infrastructure	QTY	Price	\$ 8,994,000
Core Router	2	\$ 350,000	\$ 700,000
Distribution Switches	20	\$ 25,000	\$ 500,000
Edge Switches	628	\$ 10,500	\$ 6,594,000
5 yr DNA Licensing & Smartnet		\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,200,000
AI Enabled Wifi 7 infrastructure			\$ 3,012,500
Wifi 7 Indoor Access Points	1000	\$ 1,875	\$ 1,875,000
Wifi 7 Outdoor Access Points	250	\$ 2,300	\$ 575,000
Wifi 7 5-year Licencing	1250	\$ 450	\$ 562,500
AI Enabled Video Surveillance NVR Infrastructure			\$ 550,000
AI NVR 6 Video Recorders	4	\$ 75,000	\$ 300,000
AI Analytics Recorders	2	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000
Device Licensing	400	\$ 500	\$ 200,000
AI Enabled Video Suveillance Camera Infrastructure	400	\$ 2,000	\$ 800,000
AI Enabled Endpoint Computing Infrastructure	2500	\$ 1,200	\$ 3,000,000
AI Enabled DDI Network security infrastructure (Bluecat)	4	\$ 100,000	\$ 400,000
Perimeter Security Firewall Upgrade	4	\$ 100,000	\$ 400,000
IT/Data Center Power backup infrastructure	2	\$ 150,000	\$ 300,000
Inside Building Cat6A ethernet cabling infrastucture (25,000 connections)	25000	\$ 250	\$ 6,250,000
Fiber optic cabling infrastructure / Building	42	\$ 42,500	\$ 1,785,000
Classroom Technology infrastructure	105	\$ 15,000	\$ 1,575,000
VOIP Infrastructure Upgrades	1	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
Access Control Infrastructure Upgrade	42	\$ 25,000	\$ 1,050,000
Printer/Print Mangement Infrstructure	130	\$ 7,000	\$ 910,000
Identity Management/ Portal Infrastructure	4	\$ 50,000	\$ 200,000
Virtual Server Host Infrastructure	20	\$ 10,000	\$ 200,000
Network Monitoring / Config Backup Solution	2	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000
Network Authentication Solution	3	\$ 33,000	\$ 99,000
AI Infrastructure cost estimate (Goal 5)			
GPU Infrastructure			\$ 2,000,000
Replacement of cyber range			\$ 500,000
Upgrade data center infrastructure			\$ 500,000
Grand Total*			\$ 46,185,000
<i>*Please note, these are high level estimates only. More detailed estimates will be obtained before Feb 16, 2026</i>			

SECTION 5: FACILITIES & REAL ESTATE

Led by: Anzi Gillmore

OVERVIEW

Facilities and Real Estate represent one of LSU New Orleans' greatest operational risks and greatest long-term strategic opportunities. According to the Alvarez & Marsal draft audit, deferred maintenance at UNO totals \$59 million, including more than \$46 million in projects that are already beyond their useful life. These needs exclude IT infrastructure requirements, which are documented separately in the IT & Systems section. Emergency repairs in FY24-25 exceeded \$2 million and were funded primarily through legislative relief, highlighting the unsustainable nature of current facilities operations and the urgency of modernizing physical infrastructure.

Physical campus conditions directly influence enrollment growth, student retention, faculty recruitment, and LSU New Orleans' competitiveness in the region. Without addressing deferred maintenance and completing essential condition assessments, long-term campus planning and space utilization cannot be optimized and positioned strategically for future growth.

Immediate Goal

The first immediate goal is to establish a strategic facilities portfolio that allows LSU New Orleans to operate sustainably within its current resources while positioning the campus for future growth. This work will identify which buildings should be maintained, consolidated, or repurposed to align with current enrollment and operational capacity, while preserving the facilities and land needed for LSU New Orleans to grow back into its existing footprint and, ultimately, to plan and build new space to support projected enrollment and program expansion over the next five to seven years.

STATUS: *Cost of assessment is \$89,000; this cost has been funded at the time this report was written.*

The following tables illustrate the workgroup's additional main goals and summarize: (1) immediate needed facility projects with known costs, and (2) deferred maintenance findings as presented in the Alvarez & Marsal audit. Deferred maintenance items will be further detailed within the State's assessment in early 2026. It should also be noted that while the deferred maintenance backlog is significant, the transition strategy prioritizes targeted investments that directly support enrollment, revenue generation, and safety.

Table 5.1 – Facility Projects / Proposed Next Steps

Project	Description	Timeline	Estimated Cost
Branding & Wayfinding	Campus-wide branding and signage modernization	Immediate need	\$113,000
Real Estate Development Assessment	Feasibility analysis of development opportunities	Short-term	\$75,000 - \$100,000
Hotel Market Study	Market analysis for potential hospitality development	Dependent upon real estate development assessment and growth performance	\$50,000 - \$75,000
Lakefront Arena Assessment	Assessment to determine renovation and revenue strategy	Immediate need	\$10,000 - \$25,000

Table 5.2 – Deferred Maintenance Summary (Alvarez & Marsal Findings)

Category	Estimated Amount or Status
Total Deferred Maintenance Backlog	\$59,000,000 (this number is provided by UNO and will be confirmed or corrected by the state deferred maintenance assessment in 2026)
Projects Beyond Useful Life	\$46,000,000
Specific Project Details	To be provided following LSU System Facilities Assessment (expected January 2026)
Emergency Repairs (FY24–25)	Over \$2,000,000 in unanticipated costs

Detailed Facilities & Real Estate Sub Goals

The workgroup identified sub goals that are more specific in nature, which are briefly outlined below.

Goal 1.1 – Ben Franklin High School Facilities Assessment

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Conduct coordinated planning to evaluate space, conditions, enrollment trends, academic needs, and financial pathways for short-term or long-term affiliation.	HPC proposal evaluation and accommodation planning Assess capital investment needs for impacted functions Evaluate Milneburg Hall as long-term capital solution	3 - 6 months	LSU Real Estate Workgroup Ben Franklin Leadership LSU NO & LSU System Leadership Facilities Teams LSU NO Athletics

Goal 4.1 – Student Housing Deferred Maintenance & Capital Renewal

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Address deferred maintenance in LSU NO-owned housing and review pricing models; renegotiate Privateer Place agreement if needed.	Assess and prioritize repair and upgrade needs Review and renegotiate Privateer Place contract	12 - 24 months	Real Estate Workgroup Admissions & Enrollment Student Services Finance & Administration

Goal 4.2 – Engineering Facilities Modernization

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Modernize Engineering Complex and expand industry-aligned capabilities to support maritime, defense, and shipbuilding sectors.	Industry engagement with LED, GNO Inc., Bollinger, Saronic, Metal Shark, TAI, Huntington Ingalls, NIWC Determine staffing and facility needs for competitive programs	Begin immediately	The Beach Engineering Leadership Executive Committee Academic Workgroup Research & Economic Development

Goal 5.1 – On-Campus Hotel Feasibility

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Explore feasibility of an on-campus hotel integrated with the HRT program.	Benchmark university hotel models Engage HRT faculty to assess program needs Engage consultant for market research Identify funding source (\$50,000–\$75,000) Engage potential hotel partners	1 - 36 months (phased)	LSU NO Leadership LSU System Leadership Academic & Student Life Facilities Real Estate Advisor City of New Orleans

Goal 5.2 – Lakefront Arena Strategic Assessment

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Evaluate long-term viability and modernization options for Lakefront Arena.	Conduct facility condition & use assessment Market & revenue analysis Develop scope and funding plan Plan phased implementation Evaluate rigging, entrance, concessions, staffing	1 - 48 months (phased)	Lakefront Arena Administration Athletics Department Facilities Teams Student Life Entertainment Industry Professionals External Consultants City of New Orleans

Goal 5.3 – The Cove Revitalization

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Revitalize The Cove as a student and community hub by assessing needs, addressing capital renewal, redesigning environment, and activating with programming.	Student-driven needs assessment Determine financial requirements Redesign space for modern student use Activate space with programming	2 - 18 months (phased)	Property Teams Financial Administrators HRT Subcommittee Music Department Finance & Administration Student Life/Auxiliaries Chartwells

SECTION 6: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Led by: Todd Woodward

OVERVIEW

Marketing and Communications represent one of the most immediate and mission-critical levers available to LSU New Orleans as it seeks to restore enrollment, strengthen community confidence, and establish its identity within the LSU System. As the primary driver of institutional reputation and the gateway to prospective student engagement, Marketing functions as a revenue-producing engine; not simply a passive communications office:

MARKETING SPEND → INQUIRY VOLUME → ENROLLMENT → TUITION REVENUE

Both LSU and UNO marketing teams are working collaboratively and honoring the fact that New Orleans and UNO have a unique and well-respected past, the alumni are fiercely proud, the city provides cultural differentiation, and the location is unmatched. There is tremendous opportunity, yet the urgency is clear: LSU New Orleans must begin driving interest and applications for the Fall 2026 semester now, while simultaneously preparing for a permanent brand transition to the LSU New Orleans name. Marketing and Communications (MarCom) serves both as (1) the accelerator for enrollment stabilization and (2) the steward of a unified, compelling, and data-backed brand narrative.

The workgroup's recommendations, together with insights from stakeholder surveys, underscore a strong appetite for refreshed identity, clearer storytelling, and stronger visibility. However, success will depend on aligning MarCom efforts with every other transition workgroup - including IT, Academics, Student Services, Facilities, Government Relations, and Enrollment Management - because branding is not a standalone activity; it is an institutional ecosystem.

Immediate Priorities for the Next 3-6 Months

- **Logo Agreement:** School and athletic brands aligned, approved, and guidelines created.
STATUS: No budget needed to land on the logos; yet application will need budget
- **Logo Rollout and Rollback:** Need to assess where the logo currently exists (physical and digital) today and where it needs to be changed, along with a timeline.
STATUS: No budget needed to identify where logos need to be changed; yet application will need budget
- **Differentiation Story:** We need to express the LSU New Orleans difference, especially to prospective students.
STATUS: No budget, just time
- **Internal Comms Plan:** Need a plan to bring the “family” along with the change and keep them updated.
STATUS: No budget, just time
- **Enrollment Marketing:** This is the critical area. Once we have the story, we need to develop marketing assets in mostly digital formats with some print. We are doing the assessment now.
STATUS: Identifying budget needs now

- **Website and Marketing Campaign:** The website is a priority; it needs to change colors and logos. This is the #1 marketing tool for enrollment. The marketing campaign is worth the investment, as you only get one time to grab attention with a name change, so we need a strong and targeted marketing plan for New Orleans and targeted prospects. This should include advertising (digital, outside, print), social media plan, public relations etc.)

STATUS: Estimate received by trusted external partner: \$350,000 - \$500,000

Workgroup Goals and Recommended Actions

GOAL 1: Establish the LSU New Orleans Brand

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Develop a cohesive, differentiated, and LSU-aligned brand platform that positions LSU New Orleans as a flagship educational engine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize brand architecture • Develop visual identity; prepare brand guidelines • Inventory materials requiring rebranding • Plan signage and website transition 	3 - 6 months for brand platform 6 - 12 months for rollout	LSU System Communications; LSU New Orleans Executive Team; Facilities; IT; Enrollment; Government Relations

GOAL 2: Develop the Vision Story

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Create a compelling narrative for LSU New Orleans emphasizing academic strength, economic opportunity, and regional impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate survey insights • Craft unified messaging; develop themes for all audiences • Prepare message matrices • Train leaders and ambassadors 	3 months initial development; ongoing refinement	Academic Affairs; Student Services; Enrollment Management; External Affairs; LSU System Communications

GOAL 3: Partner Support Across Workstreams

Recommended Course of Action	Specific Tasks	Timeline	Coordinating Efforts
Ensure MarCom is integrated with all workgroups to coordinate messaging and maintain consistent communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign liaisons • Align communications with planning, IT migration, facilities improvements • Standardize messaging • Support program announcements 	Immediate and ongoing	All transition workgroups; LSU System Communications; University Leadership; IT; Enrollment; Government Relations

Stakeholder Insights and Strategic Messaging Framework

Insights from the UNO Stakeholder Survey indicate strong belief in LSU's reputation elevating UNO, limited awareness of UNO differentiators, desire for improved facilities, strong employer interest in engineering and healthcare programs, and desire for a more visible and engaged campus. Messaging implications include positioning LSU New Orleans as the region's premier public university, emphasizing modern facilities, academic excellence, affordability, safety, and workforce alignment.

Enrollment-Driven Marketing Strategy

Core components include SEO and digital advertising focused on high-yield programs; complete website overhaul; messaging pillars tailored to prospective students; ambassador and influencer campaigns; CRM-driven segmented outreach; and expanded engagement with schools and community partners.

Risks and Dependencies

Risks include website rebuild timing, LSU approval for branding elements, Workday Student integration, budget requirements, and alignment with academic and facility improvements.

Marketing & Communications is a critical revenue engine for LSU New Orleans. Through strong branding, compelling narrative, data-driven enrollment marketing, and deep collaboration across workgroups, MarCom will accelerate enrollment recovery, strengthen institutional reputation, and position LSU New Orleans as a leading public research institution. Yet, the work must begin now in an effort to drive enrollment for the Fall 2026 semester.

SECTION 7: STUDENT SERVICES

Led by: Brandon Common

OVERVIEW

Student Services plays a pivotal role in LSU New Orleans' ability to attract, retain, and graduate students. While academic quality initially draws students to a university, the day-to-day student experience including registration, advising, responsiveness, campus life, communication clarity, and sense of belonging – largely determines whether students enroll, persist, and ultimately complete their degrees. As LSU New Orleans advances through a period of institutional transformation, modernizing Student Services is essential to improving student outcomes, strengthening enrollment stability, and supporting long-term financial sustainability.

The Student Services Workgroup provided valuable insight into service gaps, staffing pressures, and operational constraints. However, the transition to LSU New Orleans presents an opportunity to reimagine student services through a modern, AI-enabled lens. Rather than expanding staffing models rooted in historical and manual transactional service delivery, LSU New Orleans can leverage AI to handle routine tasks while elevating staff into higher-impact, student-facing roles. This section reframes the workgroup's recommendations through an **enrollment-first** and **student-experience-centered** perspective. Simply stated: student services must scale with enrollment without scaling cost proportionately.

Current State: Student Experience Implications

Across the submitted materials, several consistent student-facing challenges emerge when viewed through the lens of lived student experience at UNO currently. Students encounter fragmented service delivery, requiring them to navigate multiple offices and systems to resolve routine issues. This complexity creates enrollment friction, delays registration and financial clearance, and contributes to student frustration – particularly for first-generation, commuter, and working students.

Limited self-service functionality and heavy reliance on manual staff processes result in constrained office hours, delayed responses, and inconsistent guidance. Students increasingly expect 24/7 access to accurate information; when that expectation is unmet, confidence in the institution erodes.

Advising and degree planning processes are labor-intensive for staff and often opaque to students. Manual degree audits, schedule construction, and prerequisite checks increase the risk of errors, excess credit accumulation, delayed graduation, and currently only happen during human working hours.

Communication gaps further exacerbate these challenges. Students lack a unified view of outstanding tasks, upcoming deadlines, and institutional messages, increasing the likelihood of missed requirements and preventable stop-outs.

Physical conditions in student-facing spaces, including deferred maintenance in engagement and gathering areas, further affect students' sense of belonging and campus vitality. These environmental factors directly influence retention and enrollment competitiveness.

Future State Vision: An AI-Enabled, Student-Centered Model

Given much of the issues raised in the previous section (Current State), LSU New Orleans can create an integrated, technology-enabled student services ecosystem that is accessible, proactive, and personalized. In this future state, AI is deployed to simplify processes, expand staff capacity, and improve consistency, while human staff focus on meaningful engagement, guidance, and problem-solving.

Key elements of this future model include 24/7 AI-powered student support capable of answering routine questions related to registration, the course catalog and advising pathways, financial aid, billing, and institutional policies. Advisors would be supported by AI tools that perform degree audits, scenario modeling, and course sequencing, allowing advisors to shift toward coaching, persistence planning, and early intervention – all powered through Workday.

A unified Student Services Hub – both digital and physical – would serve as a single-entry point for student support, reducing confusion and eliminating unnecessary handoffs between offices. Predictive analytics identify students at risk of disengagement or attrition, enabling timely outreach and targeted support.

AI-enabled engagement systems personalize co-curricular recommendations, helping students connect with activities, resources, and communities that reinforce belonging. As deferred maintenance projects are completed, modernized student spaces further strengthen engagement and retention.

Strategic Priorities Aligned to Enrollment and Retention

AI-enabled self-service tools accelerate response times and improve accuracy, increasing enrollment yield. Modernizing Student Services is not an auxiliary initiative; it is a core enrollment and retention strategy. Key priorities include:

- Reducing enrollment friction through simplified onboarding
- Registration
- Financial clearance processes

With advanced AI technology in Workday, retention would be strengthened through early-alert systems that combine academic, engagement, and administrative data to flag risk before students disengage. Advising models would be elevated to focus on individualized student success rather than transactional scheduling.

Campus belonging would also be reinforced through coordinated engagement strategies supported by both AI-driven personalization and modernized student spaces. Organizational staffing structures should evolve to maximize the combined strengths of human expertise and AI efficiency, avoiding unnecessary staffing growth while improving service quality.

Student Services Workgroup Priorities

The following areas were identified by the Student Services workgroup and are recommended places to address for improvement at UNO. However, this report reframed those through an AI-enabled lens to take advantage of technology and position the student experience and the university's administrative structure for growth – all without utilizing humans to do manual tasks that can be automated, while addressing the student expectation that help can be available 24/7:

- **Workday Operations:** Improve configuration and training; enhanced through AI-guided navigation, automated reminders, and 24/7 support
***STATUS:** this is addressed in the IT & Systems section and requires immediate and steep financial investment*
- **Advising & Career Readiness:** Increase effectiveness through AI-enabled degree planning and proactive coaching models and create uniformity and level-set standards for students preparing for post-graduation
***STATUS:** the common advising questions can be addressed by utilizing AI features within Workday, yet the workgroup advises that the university take specific steps to address career readiness in the table at the end of this section*

- **Student Engagement:** Expand programming supported by personalized, data-informed outreach
***STATUS:** the workgroup outlined specific next steps including launching focus groups and engagement surveys, analyzing current club/organization participation rates, and - 24 -dentifying which student engagement areas to continue and develop further, versus learning which ones should cease*
- **Student Spaces:** Address deferred maintenance while integrating engagement strategy and visibility
***STATUS:** this is addressed in the Facilities & Real Estate section and requires financial investment and enrollment projections to come to fruition to generate future revenue needed to support the campus's physical infrastructure*
- **Organizational Structure:** Shift from transactional roles toward high-impact, student-facing functions supported by AI
***STATUS:** this is addressed in the IT & Systems section and requires steep financial investment*

Student Services as a Strategic Driver

Student Services directly supports institutional sustainability through the following progression:

STUDENT SERVICES → ENROLLMENT → RETENTION → COMPLETION → REVENUE STABILITY

AI-enabled support reduces friction in onboarding and registration, improves satisfaction, increases enrollment likelihood, strengthens engagement and early intervention, improves persistence and graduation rates, and ultimately contributes to a financially sustainable LSU New Orleans.

A modernized Student Services model is essential to LSU New Orleans' transformation. In addition to integrating AI thoughtfully and strategically, the university can focus on services according to actual student responses and deliver a more personalized and supportive student experience. By implementing AI functionality, staff roles are elevated rather than diminished, focusing on mentorship, guidance, and student success – which is the heart of the university's mission. This evolution will position LSU New Orleans to meet enrollment goals, strengthen retention, and deliver a student experience consistent with the expectations of a flagship public university within the LSU System.

SECTION 8: ACADEMICS

Led by: Troy Blanchard

OVERVIEW

Academic programs represent the core value proposition of LSU New Orleans. While facilities, systems, marketing, and student services enable institutional success, it is the academic portfolio – its relevance, accessibility, and alignment with workforce demand – that ultimately drives enrollment, reputation, and long-term sustainability. In January 2026, the external assessment provided by EAB will inform the Transition Committee of its market-driven findings, and at that time it will be possible to compare the recommendations to the ones provided here from the Academics Affairs workgroup that is comprised of both academic and industry representatives.

The Academic Affairs sub workgroups submitted a set of recommendations that consistently emphasize pathways, partnerships, and applied learning rather than broad program expansion. When synthesized across disciplines, these recommendations point to a clear strategic direction: LSU New Orleans should focus on high-demand, regionally distinctive academic strengths, leverage the LSU System to expand opportunity without duplicative investment, and position itself as an urban, workforce-connected institution serving New Orleans and the Gulf South.

Overall Academic Strategy Priorities or Themes

When synthesized, the Academic Affairs recommendations support the following priorities for LSU New Orleans:

- **Drive Enrollment Through Structured Pathways;** clearly defined pathways reduce uncertainty for students, improve yield, and strengthen transfer pipelines
- **Align Academic Offerings with Regional Workforce Demand;** health sciences, hospitality, maritime, cybersecurity, and creative industries reflect real labor-market needs and student interest
- **Leverage the LSU System to Expand Opportunity;** system partnerships allow LSU New Orleans to scale academic offerings efficiently while maintaining quality
- **Embed Experiential Learning as a Core Expectation;** applied learning improves retention, placement outcomes, and program reputation
- **Sequence Growth to Protect Financial Sustainability;** concentrations, certificates, and accelerated programs should precede new degree creation

SUB WORKGROUP: Arts and Arts Administration

The Arts and Arts Administration workgroup identified the School of the Arts as a high-quality but underutilized academic asset with significant enrollment potential if repositioned and modernized. Key strategies include interdisciplinary course offerings aligned with contemporary creative industries, expanded internship pipelines with New Orleans cultural institutions, and a proposed 4+1 pathway to the Master of Arts in Arts Administration to retain high-performing undergraduates. Community-facing programming and alumni engagement were emphasized as mechanisms to increase visibility, recruitment, and philanthropic support.

From an enrollment perspective, these recommendations focus on low-cost academic innovation that leverages existing faculty strengths while strengthening transfer and recruitment pipelines from regional high schools, Delgado Community College, the local arts ecosystem, and enrollment targets outside of Louisiana.

Table 8.1 – Arts & Arts Administration: Goals and Next Steps

Goal / Initiative	Description	Specific Next Steps	Enrollment & Workforce Impact	Key Partners	Timing
Interdisciplinary Arts Curriculum	Align coursework with contemporary creative industries	Review curriculum; integrate digital media and arts management content	Expands appeal and career readiness	Arts faculty; cultural institutions	Short term
4+1 MA in Arts Administration	Accelerated graduate pathway	Design 4+1 curriculum; align advising	Improves retention and graduate enrollment	Graduate Studies; Student Services	Short – medium term
Expanded Internships	Increase applied learning	Formalize internship MOUs; embed in curriculum	Improves placement outcomes	Arts organizations	Immediate
Community-Facing Programming	Increase visibility	Host showcases; alumni-led events	Strengthens recruitment and donor engagement	Alumni; Marketing	Ongoing

SUB WORKGROUP: Health Sciences

The Health Sciences pod presented one of the most enrollment-ready academic strategies, grounded in demonstrated demand and strong LSU System alignment. Recommendations include structured nursing pathways, allied health 2+2 and accelerated models, 3+2 MPH pathways linked to undergraduate majors, and early-admit or conditional acceptance models for medicine and dentistry. Dual-degree offerings and healthcare management pathways further strengthen alignment with regional workforce shortages.

Historical matriculation data demonstrates a consistent pipeline from UNO to LSU Health Sciences Center, particularly in nursing and allied health fields. Formalizing and marketing these pathways provides an immediate opportunity to increase enrollment yield without requiring LSU New Orleans to replicate high-cost professional programs.

Table 8.2 – Health Sciences: Goals and Next Steps

Goal / Initiative	Description	Specific Next Steps	Enrollment & Workforce Impact	Key Partners	Timing
Nursing Pathways	Structured BSN pathways	Formalize agreements; align advising	Addresses workforce shortages	LSUHSC	Immediate
Allied Health 2+2	Expand allied health access	Define articulation agreements	Increases transfer enrollment	Community colleges	Short term
3+2 MPH Pathways	Accelerated public health degrees	Align curricula; admissions criteria	Builds public health workforce	LSUHSC	Medium
Early-Admit Health Professions	Conditional MD/DDS pathways	Define criteria; coordinate advising	Improves yield and quality	LSU System	Medium

SUB WORKGROUP: Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism

The Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism (HRT) Administration is uniquely positioned to serve Louisiana’s largest employment sector through place-based, applied academic programming – and is strategically placed in one of the planet’s most renowned culinary and cultural meccas.

The workgroup emphasized the development of signature concentrations in culinary arts, hospitality operations, festivals and events, and hotel management, supported by expanded paid internships embedded within degree requirements. Certificate programs and workforce credentials provide opportunities to serve both traditional students and working professionals. These initiatives reinforce LSU New Orleans’ distinct identity by leveraging New Orleans as a living laboratory for hospitality education – an advantage that cannot be easily replicated elsewhere in the state.

Table 8.3 – Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism: Goals and Next Steps

Goal / Initiative	Description	Specific Next Steps	Enrollment & Workforce Impact	Key Partners	Timing
Signature Concentrations	Culinary, festivals, hotel operations	Develop concentrations; update marketing	Differentiates program	Industry partners	Short term
Paid Internships	Embedded applied learning	Secure employer commitments	Improves placement and retention	Hospitality employers	Immediate
Certificate Programs	Workforce credentials	Design stackable certificates	Expands professional enrollment	Workforce partners	Medium
Living-Lab Model	Place-based instruction	Formalize experiential projects	Reinforces brand	City partners	Ongoing

SUB WORKGROUP: Maritime, Engineering, Cybersecurity, and Innovation

The Maritime, Engineering, Cybersecurity, and Innovation pod articulated a disciplined vision to position LSU New Orleans as a regional hub for maritime systems, cyber-physical security, logistics, and defense-related workforce development. UNO has a history of providing quality education in the traditional engineering disciplines, and these specific focus areas within the broader engineering field reflect the differentiation that LSU New Orleans can offer to attract those seeking skills required for employment in high-demand Gulf Coast industries.

Key recommendations include unified maritime-focused concentrations across engineering and cybersecurity, structured workforce pipelines with K–12 and community colleges, paid internships aligned with industry security requirements, and the development of a research-to-practice Center of Excellence.

Importantly, the workgroup emphasized sequencing growth to ensure enrollment demand, faculty hiring, and capital investment remain aligned, protecting financial sustainability while building long-term academic distinction.

Table 8.4 – Maritime, Engineering, Cybersecurity & Innovation: Goals and Next Steps

Goal / Initiative	Description	Specific Next Steps	Enrollment & Workforce Impact	Key Partners	Timing
Maritime Concentrations	Differentiated engineering focus	Align curricula across disciplines	Targets Gulf Coast workforce	Industry partners	Short term
Workforce Pipelines	K–12 and CC alignment	Formalize pathways	Builds enrollment pipeline	Schools; CCs	Medium
Paid Internships	Industry-aligned learning	Partner with defense firms	Improves recruitment	Employers	Immediate
Center of Excellence	Research-to-practice hub	Scope center; identify funding	Raises profile	LSU System	Medium – long term

The Academic Affairs workgroups articulated a pragmatic and opportunity-driven academic vision for LSU New Orleans. Executed in coordination with Marketing, Student Services, Facilities, and Finance, this academic strategy positions LSU New Orleans as a modern, relevant, and competitive public university within the LSU System.

SECTION 9: GOVERNANCE

Led by: Jane Cassidy

OVERVIEW

Governance actions during the transition of UNO to LSU New Orleans are primarily driven by accreditation, compliance, and policy alignment requirements. The Governance workgroup focused on ensuring continuity of accreditation, minimizing institutional risk, and aligning university policies with LSU System requirements.

At the time of writing this document, accreditation and policy items were being actively managed by leaders from both LSU and UNO working together collaboratively. The Governance workgroup developed the following goals and recommended courses of action, with one additional goal being added after the following was submitted:

GOAL 1: Complete and submit the substantive change document to SACSCOC reflecting UNO's governance change by March 15, 2026

- **Define the goal:** LSU and UNO are both accredited by SACSCOC. The change in governance of UNO from the UL System to the LSU System requires a substantive change process through SACSCOC.
- **Recommended course of action:** The provost's team at UNO is already working on this document.
- **Specific tasks:**
 - Write substantive change document. Led by provost's office at UNO
 - Host a SACSCOC site visit on a date to be determined in 2026, organized by the Provost's office at UNO
- **Estimated cost:** \$15,000
- **Timeline of goal:** Submission of report to SACSCOC due on March 15, 2026; site visit in 2026 to be determined in conjunction with SACSCOC
- **Coordinating efforts:** Support provided by LSU Academic Affairs and the University of Louisiana System as needed

GOAL 2: Receive, review, and implement any monitoring reports resulting from the decanal SACSCOC reaffirmation process at UNO

- **Define the goal:** UNO is currently working through their decanal reaffirmation process with SACSCOC. The decision regarding their status will be announced on December 9, 2025, at the annual SACSCOC convention. Reaffirmation is expected. A possible outcome is being reaffirmed with monitoring reports due on specific standards. Those reports would be due in six months increments over the next couple of years.
- **Recommended course of action:** The Provost's team at UNO would receive the decision by SACSCOC and put into motion any monitoring reports. If there are no monitoring reports required, this goal is complete.
- **Specific tasks:**
 - Make appropriate changes to resolve concerns expressed by SACSCOC in the reaffirmation decision, which will be led by the Provost's office at UNO. Any cost will be dependent on the standard of concern.
- **Timeline of goal:** the SACSCOC reaffirmation decision will be conveyed on December 9, 2025 (*no information was shared regarding the status of this item at the time of writing the report*). The due date of monitoring report(s), if necessary, will be conveyed by SACSCOC. They typically are due every six months until the concern is resolved.
- **Coordinating efforts:** Support provided by LSU Academic Affairs and the University of Louisiana System as needed.

GOAL 3: Align LSU Permanent Memoranda and LSU Bylaws and Regulations with UNO policies

- **Define the goal:** UNO policies need to be in alignment with LSU policies.
- **Recommended course of action:** The Provost's team at UNO is already working on this project by comparing policies and protocol from UNO and the UL System with LSU System policies.
- **Specific tasks:** Identify any UNO policies that need to be revised, added, or revoked based on LSU System policies.
- **Timeline of goal:** Completion date will be the date when UNO officially becomes LSU-New Orleans
- **Coordinating efforts:** Support provided by LSU Academic Affairs and the University of Louisiana System as needed.

The Governance workgroup added a fourth goal to their list, which is actively being managed by both institutions in partnership: to audit the 10 existing professional program accreditations listed on the UNO website: ([Accreditation | The University of New Orleans](#)). Execution of these governance priorities is essential to protecting accreditation, financial aid eligibility, and institutional credibility during the transition to LSU New Orleans.

SECTION 10: GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND FUNDRAISING

Led by: John Walters

OVERVIEW

The Government Relations, External Affairs, and Fundraising Workgroup focused on positioning LSU New Orleans for credibility, visibility, and long-term resource development during and following the transition into the LSU System. Recommendations emphasize coordinated legislative engagement, transparent communication regarding transition actions and funding, and a phased build-out of development and foundation capacity aligned with enrollment growth. Fundraising is the second most robust revenue stream for universities, and the team leading this charge should be structurally designed to support all university operations and not cannibalize efforts. Fundraising efforts should therefore be coordinated and integrated into the university's financial planning activities.

Table 10.1 – Government Relations & External Affairs: Priorities and Actions

Priority Area	Description	Specific Actions	Strategic Purpose	Key Stakeholders	Timing
Legislative Education & Outreach	Educate legislators and executive leadership on LSU System processes and transition actions	Brief legislative committees and executive branch leaders on transition steps and governance	Build trust and understanding during transition	LSU System; Legislature; Executive Branch	Immediate & Ongoing
Capital & Appropriations Alignment	Align facilities planning with LSU System capital and appropriations processes	Educate UNO Facilities Office on LSU capital outlay and appropriations processes	Improve access to state funding mechanisms	LSU Facilities; LSU System	Immediate
Transparency on Prior Funding	Clarify prior investments under UL System	Identify how previous \$20M was spent	Strengthen legislative confidence	LSU System; Legislature	Short term
State Advocacy Visibility	Increase LSU New Orleans presence in statewide advocacy efforts	Include LSU New Orleans in LSU Day at the Capitol	Signal institutional integration and momentum	LSU System Government Relations	Annual
Return on Investment Messaging	Set expectations regarding timing of outcomes	Communicate that ROI will follow full system integration on July 1, 2026	Manage expectations and sustain support	Legislators; Executive Branch	Ongoing

Table 10.2 – Development Capacity: Phased Recommendations

Phase	Organizational Focus	Key Roles Identified	Estimated Compensation (as provided)	Trigger for Advancement
Short term	Stabilize core development operations	VP/Chief Development Officer; Annual Giving Officer; Alumni Director; Development Coordinator; Executive Director, Athletic Association	\$70K–\$250K per role	Immediate transition needs
Long term	Full build-out of advancement organization	SVP/Chief Development Officer; VP Development; VP Government, Corporate & Foundation Giving; Major Gifts; Planned Giving; Alumni Leadership; Grant Writer	\$60K–\$350K per role	Enrollment growth multiplier achieved (3–5 years)

Before embarking on planning for the ideal design of a fundraising team at UNO, LSU will need to understand how the UNO Foundation has historically supported the university and assess what changes are necessary to ensure that resources are responsibly managed and deployed, including how restricted funds (endowed and donor-advised) have supported or been integrated with the university’s operating budget.

Table 10.3 – External Affairs & Fundraising Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Description	Mitigation Strategy	Responsible Party
Legislative Misalignment	Inconsistent messaging during transition	Centralized coordination through LSU System	LSU System Government Relations
Overbuilt Advancement Structure	Staffing ahead of enrollment growth	Phased build-out tied to enrollment metrics	Executive Leadership; possibly Foundation
Donor Uncertainty	Hesitation during institutional transition	Clear messaging, visible wins, and disciplined priorities	Advancement Leadership

The workgroup’s recommendations emphasize disciplined and coordinated external engagement and a phased approach to fundraising capacity that aligns with institutional readiness and enrollment growth. By coordinating government relations, external affairs, and advancement strategy, LSU New Orleans can strengthen credibility, secure public support, and build a sustainable philanthropic foundation for long-term success.

SECTION 11: RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Led by: Cale Husted

OVERVIEW

The Research, Innovation, and Economic Development recommendations focus on rebuilding LSU New Orleans' capacity to participate meaningfully in applied research, industry partnerships, and workforce-aligned innovation. Rather than proposing broad expansion, the workgroup emphasized restoring foundational research capabilities, strengthening faculty and infrastructure readiness, and aligning research activity with regional economic priorities where LSU New Orleans already possesses academic and geographic advantage.

Across the submissions, the implicit rationale for these recommendations is clear: LSU New Orleans must first reestablish baseline research capacity and compliance before pursuing growth. The sequencing of actions – faculty hiring or realignment, infrastructure improvement, partnership development, and grant competitiveness – reflects an intentional progression designed to reduce institutional risk while positioning the university for sustainable research activity.

Core Research Focus Areas

The workgroup identified a focused set of research domains where LSU New Orleans can realistically compete and contribute to research activity within the LSU System. These areas – computer science, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), maritime and defense-related research, and health sciences – are consistently referenced through named partners, task prioritization, and timeline sequencing. Collectively, they reflect alignment with federal funding priorities, regional workforce demand, and existing institutional strengths.

More specifically, enhanced capabilities within cybersecurity and AI are needed to support the maritime, defense, and space industries. Rebuilding units of which UNO is historically known to compete, such as Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering (NAME), LSU New Orleans Transportation Institute (UNOTI), Mechanical Engineering, Planning and Urban Studies (PLUS), and others, will enable the university to expand existing research and instructional relationships with Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC), US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Maritime Administration (MARAD), NASA Michoud Assembly Facility, and nearby Stennis Space Center (SSC).

Table 11.1 – Research Program Rebuild and Expansion Priorities

Focus Area	Description	Key Actions	Primary Partners	Timeline
Computer Science, AI, and Cybersecurity	Rebuild research and instructional capacity in high-demand computing disciplines	Hire faculty; modernize curriculum; pursue applied research opportunities	Industry partners; federal agencies; LSU System	6 – 18 months
Maritime and Defense Research	Position LSU New Orleans as a contributor to regional shipbuilding and defense innovation	Develop applied research partnerships; align faculty expertise	NIWC; SSC; maritime industry partners	12 – 24 months
Health Sciences Research	Expand collaborative biomedical and public health research activity	Establish joint research initiatives and pipelines	LSUHSC; healthcare partners	12 – 36 months

11.2 Research Infrastructure and Institutional Readiness

A significant portion of the workgroup's recommendations focus on restoring research infrastructure and administrative readiness. These actions are not framed as growth initiatives but as prerequisites for participation in competitive research environments. Compliance, safety, data systems, and administrative support are treated as gating factors that must be addressed before research activity can scale.

Table 11.2 – Research Infrastructure and Capacity-Building Actions

Area	Description	Specific Actions	Rationale	Timeline
Research Administration	Strengthen pre- and post-award support	Improve grant administration processes; staffing alignment	Enable grant competitiveness and compliance	6 – 12 months
Compliance and Safety	Ensure research compliance readiness	Update protocols and training	Reduce institutional risk	Immediate – 12 months
IT and Data Systems	Support research computing and data needs	Coordinate with IT modernization efforts	Enable applied research and analytics	12 – 24 months

Biomedical, Health, and Cross-Institutional Partnerships

The workgroup emphasized cross-institutional partnerships as a means of expanding research activity without duplicative investment. Collaborations specifically with LSU Health Sciences Center and regional healthcare systems are positioned as pathways to shared research capacity, faculty collaboration, and student pipelines.

Table 11.3 – Health and Biomedical Research Partnerships

Partnership Type	Description	Intended Outcome	Key Partners	Timeline
Joint Research Initiatives	Collaborative research programs	Shared expertise and funding opportunities	LSUHSC	12 – 24 months
Student Research Pipelines	Undergraduate-to-graduate pathways	Strengthen enrollment and retention	LSUHSC; Academic units	Ongoing
Applied Health Research	Practice-oriented research projects	Regional health impact and workforce alignment	Healthcare providers	18 – 36 months

The sequencing outlined across the workgroup submissions reflects an understanding of institutional dependencies. Faculty hiring and infrastructure readiness precede external grant competitiveness, while partnerships are phased to align with capacity. This approach minimizes the risk of overextension and aligns research growth with available resources and administrative support. By prioritizing readiness, targeted growth, and applied research, LSU New Orleans can strengthen its research profile, contributing to the competitiveness of the LSU enterprise.

CONCLUSION

The transition of the University of New Orleans to LSU New Orleans presents a decisive and time-sensitive opportunity to correct longstanding structural weaknesses while protecting and strengthening the State's investment in public higher education within the state's flagship system. The work synthesized in this report demonstrates both the magnitude of the challenges inherited and the seriousness of the effort already underway to address them.

The challenges facing the institution are not abstract or long-term; they are immediate, structural, and well understood. However, the success of this transition will depend not on vision alone, but on the speed, discipline, and coordination with which immediate actions are taken.

Simply stated: the central risk is not a lack of ideas or alignment, but delay.

The most urgent reality is financial. Declining enrollment, historical under-collection of receivables, and deferred maintenance have constrained cash flow and limited the institution's ability to reinvest in its core mission. Without rapid progress in stabilizing enrollment, strengthening billing and collections, and modernizing enterprise systems such as Workday, LSU New Orleans will continue to operate in a reactive posture – diverting resources to emergency fixes rather than strategic growth, and continuing the negative trajectory. Enrollment recovery is not one priority among many; it is the primary driver of revenue and the foundation upon which all other improvements depend.

Equally critical is the modernization of operational infrastructure. Financial controls, IT systems, HR processes, and facilities conditions are deeply interconnected. Delays or underinvestment in these foundational areas would prolong operational risk, erode confidence among students and employees, and compromise LSU New Orleans' ability to scale enrollment and academic offerings. The consequences of inaction are clear: continued liquidity strain, rising deferred maintenance costs, and diminished competitiveness in an increasingly demanding higher education marketplace.

At the same time, this report makes clear that LSU New Orleans possesses significant strategic advantages. Strong alignment with regional workforce demand, differentiated academic programs, the strength of the LSU brand, and a unique New Orleans location provide a powerful platform for renewal. The recommendations outlined herein are intentionally sequenced to ensure that stabilization precedes expansion, and that growth is pursued in a way that is financially responsible and operationally sustainable.

The path forward requires strong and decisive leadership, early investment, and sustained coordination across the LSU System, state leadership, and campus stakeholders. The actions recommended in this report are not optional enhancements; they are prerequisites for restoring credibility, rebuilding enrollment, and ensuring that LSU New Orleans emerges as a self-sustaining, competitive, and mission-aligned institution.

Delay increases risk. Focused execution creates momentum. The choices made in the next 6 months will determine whether this transition fulfills its promise or perpetuates the challenges it seeks to resolve.