

**Contact: Natalie McClurg**  
**(337)482-0694, mcclurg@louisiana.edu**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 26, 2009**

## **UL Lafayette Receives Federal Disaster Resistant University Grant**

LAFAYETTE, La. -- The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has received a \$157,500 grant from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to implement a pre-disaster hazard mitigation plan.

The grant is part of FEMA's Disaster Resistant University (DRU) program which assists universities and colleges, through state and local governments, in implementing a sustained program to reduce risks associated with disasters.

Under the leadership of its National Incident Management Systems and Advanced Technologies (NIMSAT) Institute, UL Lafayette is collaborating with James Lee Witt Associates of Washington D.C., part of the Global Options Group, to develop the hazard mitigation plan in accordance with state and federal standards, and both university and non-university stakeholders alike will be involved in the planning process.

With just more than 16,300 students enrolled, UL Lafayette – the largest campus in the University of Louisiana System – maintains 1,400 acres and more than 260 facilities. Potential natural hazards such as hurricanes, drought, extreme heat, and tornadoes, as well as man-made hazards such as student violence and laboratory accidents, will be included in the planning process to reflect a breadth of possibilities facing such a large school.

The plan will identify and lay the ground work for implementing hazard mitigation projects, including those that are eligible for federal funding. Each year millions of homeland security grant dollars are made available to eligible applicants, and with an approved hazard mitigation plan, UL Lafayette will be eligible for these competitive grant funds.

“Oftentimes there are improvements that we would like to make to campus facilities that we cannot execute due to budgetary constraints,” said Joey Pons, director of Environmental Health and Safety at UL Lafayette. “This plan will position us better in the future to improve campus safety.”

UL Lafayette's project is unique among DRU projects in that it incorporates an accurate 3-D model of the campus. Architecture faculty and students are working to build the model, while researchers at the NIMSAT Institute are gathering crucial data to integrate in to the model.

“Before, during, and after an incident, campus officials will be able to peel back layers of affected buildings and see, for instance, how many students are inside and what critical assets are in danger at any given point in time,” said Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, Executive Director of the NIMSAT Institute. “The 3-D model, within an all-hazards framework, will be an invaluable tool in

the hazard mitigation plan to reduce the loss of life and property on campus, and it will only be improved by the incorporation of the hazard data which comes out of this plan.”

UL Lafayette is a leader among universities for its accomplishments in emergency management research and development. The NIMSAT Institute, a research center focused on enhancing national resiliency to a full range of potential disasters, has garnered the respect of government agencies, practitioners, and higher educational institutions across the country through its efforts in the creation of government-industry partnerships, analysis of critical infrastructures and key resources, and development of decision support tools for homeland security and emergency management professionals.

For more information on UL Lafayette's DRU project and hazard mitigation plan, contact the NIMSAT Institute at (337) 482-0694 or visit [www.nimsat.org](http://www.nimsat.org).

###

#### About UL Lafayette

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is the second largest university in the state, with over 16,000 students. It's a public institution that awards bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. It includes diverse offerings from the humanities to scientific research and leads the nation in areas like computer science, biology and nursing. Its student-athletes – Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns – compete in NCAA Division I, the highest level of collegiate competition. The campus is located in the heart of Acadiana – a rich cultural area known for its excellent food, music, festivals and quality of life.