UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS - HISTORY

The University of New Orleans (originally called Louisiana State University in New Orleans - LSUNO) was established by Act 60 of the 1956 Louisiana Legislature to bring tax-supported higher education to the metropolitan area. An ideal campus site was acquired when the United States Navy abandoned its air station on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain in late 1957. The next year marked the opening of the first racially integrated public university in the South. A total of 1,460 students, all freshmen and double the number originally anticipated, arrived for this occasion.

By September 1961, when the new school had become a full four-year institution, enrollment exceeded 3,000, and the faculty had grown from the original 63 to 150 members. Two new permanent buildings, the Liberal Arts Building and the Sciences Building, and a central utilities plant were completed and in operation by the time of the first commencement in the spring of 1962. The initial class of graduating seniors numbered 115.

In the summer of 1962 the Vice President in Charge was designated Chancellor. This signaled the end of LSUNO’s status as a branch of the Baton Rouge campus. In September, 1969, when the enrollment exceeded 10,000, LSUNO became the second-largest university in Louisiana. By this time it had developed into a large academic complex embracing several colleges, schools, and institutes, offering graduate work in many different fields and awarding both the master’s and doctoral degrees. In February, 1974, the LSU Board of Supervisors approved a name change, and LSUNO became the University of New Orleans.

By the fall of 2005, UNO had an enrollment exceeding 17,000 and had five senior colleges: Liberal Arts, Sciences, Education, Business Administration, and Engineering. UNO suffered damage across campus during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, but quickly resumed classes 42 days after the storm passed – a unique feat among area institutions during the fall of 2005. While enrollment dropped significantly, the university was able to streamline operations and refocus efforts on key programs that are nationally noted or ranked while still providing the best possible education for the people of New Orleans.

The University of New Orleans is categorized as an SREB Four-Year 2 institution, as a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University-Intensive, and as a SACSCOC Level VI institution. Our students enjoy a broad range of academic programs, nearly one-quarter of which are at the master’s or doctoral level. In addition, extracurricular activities, including NCAA intercollegiate athletics, an extensive program of intramural sports, and frequent exhibits and programs in music, drama, ballet, and the fine arts round out the student experience.

On December 6, 2011, the University of New Orleans officially became part of the University of Louisiana system. Culturally, socially, economically, and intellectually, the University of New Orleans is one of the major assets of the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana. The University has conferred over 70,000 degrees since the first graduating class of 118 in 1962. UNO has distinguished itself since 1958 and will continue to do so in the future.