

# Rural Louisiana

A quarterly publication of the Center for Rural Development

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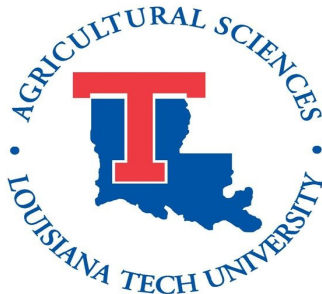
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**W**elcome to the Winter 2010 issue of Rural Louisiana. The Louisiana Tech Rural Development Center strives to serve as a linkage between the research and expertise at Louisiana Tech University and rural communities with the overall goal of improving the quality of life in Louisiana's rural areas. To meet this mission, the Rural Development Center (1) conducts research and policy analysis on issues of importance to rural Louisiana communities (2) engages Louisiana Tech faculty, staff, and students in research relevant to rural communities, and (3) facilitates linkages in Louisiana among Louisiana Tech, other universities, state and federal agencies, rural development practitioners, and rural communities and community organizations. One outlet for connecting communities with the University is through the newsletter, which will feature research and outreach efforts of faculty and staff at Louisiana Tech.

This issue features an interview with Dr. James Smith, Director of Louisiana Tech University's Global Campus.



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# Interview with Dr. James Smith, Director of Louisiana Tech University Global Campus

## How long has Louisiana Tech University offered online classes?

Dr. Smith: Dr. Dennis Minor, now deceased, offered the first online course at Louisiana Tech University in 1995. It was in technical writing. Tech is by no means new to technical writing online.

## What prompted Louisiana Tech University to establish a Global Campus?

Dr. Smith: We're reaching out to rural and global communities to share the excellent academic resources we have at Louisiana Tech University to an audience of individuals who can't quit their jobs or move to Ruston to take classes in order to provide flexible opportunities for professional, academic, and personal growth.

## What type of technology is Louisiana Tech University using for its online courses?

Dr. Smith: The Internet and Blackboard. If a student has a computer with Internet access they should have no difficulty taking our online courses.

## How can classes on the university calendar be arranged on a quarterly basis, but semester hours awarded?

Dr. Smith: Several decades ago, Louisiana Tech was requested by its governing board to pilot a quarter system that retained semester hour credits. This arrangement was a huge success with students and has continued through today. This system arranges course meeting times into segments equivalent to semester hours, usually around 45 clock hours of direct instruction per 3 semester hours credit. This system offers students the opportunity to transfer hours from other universities and they can graduate quicker.

## Available Degrees

### Associates

Health Information Technology

### Bachelor's

General Studies Degree

### Bachelor's

Health Information Administration

### Masters

English

### Masters

History

### Masters

Nutrition and Dietetics

### Masters

Family and Consumer Sciences

### Masters

Health Information Management

### Graduate Certificate

in Adult Education

### Graduate Certificate

in Technical Writing and Communications

### Graduate Certificate

in Dynamics of Domestic and Family Violence

**In addition we offer over 6,000 online continuing education courses through our Division of Continuing Education website.**

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**Louisiana Tech University offers distance learners a truly outstanding selection of health information administration/management degree programs. Aside from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, what other organizations accredit these programs?**

Dr. Smith: Our health information programs have maintained continuous accreditation for almost 3 decades. The Bachelor's degree program is one of the only programs on the LaTech campus to receive academic commendation from the LA Board of Regents. The programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM).

**Can a student who earned the Associate of Science in Health Information Technology from Louisiana Tech University apply credits from that associate's degree towards the Bachelor of Science in Health Information Administration that is also taught by the university?**

Dr. Smith: Yes. We have a progression program designed to assist students in doing just that! The program is designed to meet the needs of our current students, our returning graduates, and the needs of students graduating from the 270 accredited associate degree programs nationally.

**How long has the technical writing program been offered online by Louisiana Tech University?**

Dr. Smith: The electronic graduate certificate in technical writing has been available since 2005. It was first funded by a 2004 Board of Regents SELECT Grant.

**The Louisiana Tech University Global Campus website mentions a Graduate Certificate in Dynamics of Domestic and Family Violence. Is this program available for students to start applying to it now?**

Dr. Smith: Student may apply to this program. Information regarding the program is linked on four pages of the Global Campus website; certificates, adult program, programs, and professional development pages.



## **Have you received feedback from graduates of the health information and technical writing programs?**

### **Bill Randall, New Orleans, LA, student in the e-certification program in technical writing:**

“Even with a degree and 20 years of experience in technical communication, I saw benefits from the very first course. The classes include people with a wide range of backgrounds, the instructors encourage discussion and cooperation, and the online format is much more convenient than traditional evening classes.”

### **Let’s say for instance that I currently live anywhere in rural Louisiana, but am interested in earning the Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Communications. How might my location affect me in this case?**

Dr. Smith: It should not. You will apply to the graduate school at <http://www.latech.edu/graduateschool/> and your information will be processed. If accepted, you will receive a letter, just like anyone else, and your advisor will be the program coordinator, Dr. Robert Rudnicki in the English Department. He will assist you in registering for courses at a distance and advise you regarding what courses are available for you to take each quarter. When you successfully complete the program, he will verify your accomplishment and put your paperwork through to the registrar. Like most students at Tech, you will register and take care of financial considerations through our B.O.S.S. system. Your textbooks are available online through the Tech bookstore. Like all Tech students, you will have a real person to assist you through every step of the process. Your advisor is simply a phone call or email away.

### **Are the online programs taught by Louisiana Tech University eligible for GI Bill reimbursement?**

Dr. Smith: Yes. All our online courses have been approved through the VA for application toward degree programs and for GI Bill reimbursement. That is a function of each University’s Veteran’s Affairs Liaison (ours is Juanita Hinton – [jhinton@latech.edu](mailto:jhinton@latech.edu) )

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### **What advice do you have for distance learners who are thinking about applying to Louisiana Tech University?**

Dr. Smith: As a student at Louisiana Tech University you will be part of one of the finest comprehensive public research universities in the nation. You will find dedicated faculty, staff, and administration who will work with you to achieve your goals for a quality online education without the barriers of time, location, and even without leaving your employment. Contact us over the web at <http://www.latech.edu/globalcampus> or call (318) 257-4049.