Goals

Consultative: To provide professional knowledge and support to both active and potential participants of our non-credit programs, both visiting and campus affiliated.

Cultural: To provide facilities and a wide array of programs that promote the rich diversity of our city, state and region.

Educational: to provide non-credit educational enrichment programs aimed at increasing individual skill and knowledge in a wide range of subject areas with the aid of certified and knowledgeable instructors.

Employment: To provide employment that will help realize individual potential and professional development opportunities for departmental staff, student workers, and others eligible for employment in a safe and friendly environment.

Public Relations: To utilize the facilities and resources of Nicholls State University, thereby enhancing the public's perception of the institution.

Recruitment: To promote an awareness of Nicholls State University to individuals interested in non-credit enrichment programs which will encourage repeat business and aid in the recruitment of ever-growing business relationships.

Market Position

The Office of Continuing Education emphasizes the university's attractive location, adequate facilities, knowledgeable instructors and a large selection of non-credit programs covering a variety of topics for both youth and adult participants. The department focuses on providing and prompting non-credit programs that will enrich the members of the community through professional or personal growth while maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction. Continuing Education takes pride in it's efforts to advance the community.

Summer youth programs are targeted at attracting the youth consumers of Lafourche and surrounding parishes. Programs range in targeted age groups. Advertising efforts are directed to family's through direct mail and email communications as well as promotional materials circulated at high-traffic venues such as schools, restaurants and doctor's offices.

Primary Markets

Our primary markets are adults and children in Lafourche parish. These markets include both men and women in a wide range of ages with different needs and characteristics.

Demographics of Market

The Office of Continuing Education pulls its customers from an area consisting of Lafourche, Assumption, Terrebonne, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Jefferson, and Orleans parishes. Demographic information has been listed below and was collected from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Lafourche Parish

- Population - 89,974
- Race percentage - White, 82.9%; African American, 12.6%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.3%; Hispanic/ Latino, 1.4%; Asian, 0.7%
• Gender - Female, 51.2%; Male 48.8%
• Median household income - $32,795
• High school graduates - 27,937
• College graduates - 4,977
• Four largest employers - retail trade (323 establishments/3,869 employees); manufacturing (66 est./2,464 emp.); administrative support, waste management, and remediation services (46 est./2,369 emp.); accommodation and food services (129 est./1,554 emp.)

Assumption Parish

• Population - 23,388
• Race percentage - White, 67.2%; African American, 31.5%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.3%; Hispanic/ Latino, 1.2%; Asian, 0.2%
• Gender - Female, 51.6%; Male 48.4%
• Median household income - $29,993
• High school graduates - 6,632
• College graduates - 884
• Four largest employers - retail trade (59 establishments/599 employees); health care and social assistance (13 est./307 emp.); wholesale trade (15 est./114 emp.); accommodation and food services (13 est./116 emp.)

Terrebonne Parish

• Population - 104,503
• Race percentage - White, 74.1%; African American, 17.8%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 5.3%; Hispanic/ Latino, 1.6%; Asian, 0.8%
• Gender - Female, 50.9%; Male 49.1%
• Median household income - $31,744
• High school graduates - 33,185
• College graduates - 5,243
• Four largest employers - retail trade (482 establishments/6,237 employees); manufacturing (119 est./3,990 emp.); wholesale trade (212 est./2,467 emp.); accommodation and food services (173 est./3,133 emp.)

St. Charles Parish

• Population - 48,072
• Race percentage - White, 72.4%; African American, 25.2%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.3%; Hispanic/ Latino, 1.4%
• Gender - Female, 51.2%; Male 48.8%
• Median household income - $41,905
• High school graduates - 18,836
• College graduates - 3,753
• Four largest employers - retail trade (119 establishments/1,316 employees); manufacturing (37 est./5,068 emp.); administrative support, waste management, and remediation services (49 est./2,225 emp.); wholesale trade (84 est./1,485 emp.)

St. James Parish

• Population - 21,216
• Race percentage - White, 50.0%; African American, 49.4%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.1%; Hispanic/ Latino, 0.6%
• Gender - Female, 51.8%; Male 48.2%
• Median household income - $30,830
• High school graduates - 7,342
• College graduates - 978
• Four largest employers - retail trade (55 establishments/ 609 employees); manufacturing (26 est./2,858 emp.); health care and social assistance (23 est./ 289 emp.); wholesale trade (15 est./ 282 emp.)

Ascension Parish

• Population - 76,627
• Race percentage - White, 77.4%; African American, 20.3%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.3%; Hispanic/ Latino, 2.5%; Asian, 0.3%
• Gender - Female, 50.8%; Male 49.2%
• Median household income - $39,248
• High school graduates - 22,928
• College graduates - 3,099
• Four largest employers - retail trade (304 establishments/ 3,777 employees); manufacturing (86 est./5,577 emp.); health and social assistance (92 est./ 1,542 emp.); accommodation and food services (103 est./ 1,729 emp.)

Jefferson Parish

• Population - 455,466
• Race percentage - White, 69.8%; African American, 22.9%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.4%; Hispanic/ Latino, 7.1%; Asian, 3.1%
• Gender - Female, 52.0%; Male 48.0%
• Median household income - $37,312
• High school graduates - 215,046
• College graduates - 53,092
• Four largest employers - retail trade (2,038 establishments/ 32,403 employees); healthcare and social assistance (1,170 est./ 17,797 emp.); administrative support, waste management, and remediation services (665 est./ 21,403 emp.); accommodation and food services (948 est./ 18,676 emp.)

Orleans Parish

• Population - 484,674
• Race percentage - White, 28.1%; African American, 67.3%; American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.2%; Hispanic/ Latino, 3.1%; Asian, 2.3%
• Gender - Female, 53.1%; Male 46.9%
• Median household income - $25,200
• High school graduates - 207,857
• College graduates - 68,451
• Four largest employers - retail trade (1,871 establishments/ 20,405 employees); health care and social assistance (1,022 est./19,447 emp.); administrative support, waste management, and remediation services (481 est./ 14,580 emp.); accommodation and food services (1,105 est./ 32,081 emp.)

Segmenting the Target Market Based on Program Interest and Age Group


**Technical/Business-Related Adult Programs** - Professional instruction in computer, finance, and test and certification programs; advancement in career skills; gain a competitive advantage over others. Men and women 19 years old and up who want to advance their knowledge and skills in computers, finance, and test preparation; May want to increase skills for personal life or to help advance business career.

**Hobby/Personal-Related Adult Programs** - Professional instruction in the following areas: arts and crafts, dance, floral, physical enrichment, and swimming; obtain some fundamentals of these activities to use them in their personal lives. Men and women 10 years old and up who want to have fun while learning new hobbies or skills; like to interact with other individual of the community, or are looking for something to do with idle time.

**Athletic-Related Youth Programs** - Professional instruction in sports activities such as: baseball, football, basketball, volleyball, etc; get basic understanding of the sport; learn fundamental and advanced skills to improve performance; learn fair play and sportsmanship. Youth boys and girls, 6 months to 18 years old who want to have fun while learning skills and are also competitive, active and energetic.

**Education-Related Youth Programs** - Professional instruction in academic areas such as: science, social studies, or development area (dyslexia); do fun activities related to these subject areas and learn how to deal with some adversities. Youth, boys and girls, 3-18 years old who want to do fun activities while learning; performing activities that will help them grow as individuals; may need help in some aspect of learning.

**Competition**

The Office of Continuing Education has several competitors in the region who offer many of the same types of programs and host facilities that Nicholls State University does. These competitors include: Louisiana State University, the University of New Orleans, Tulane University, Delgado Community College, Southeast Louisiana University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and the YMCA in nearby Houma. However, the department also has some competition from many other sources. These competitors are, but are not limited to, as follows: the Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce which hosts seminars on various subject matter, "How To" guides (books, video tapes, Internet sites, etc.), local youth organizations and clubs (boy scouts/girl scouts, summer baseball/softball leagues, etc.), area technical schools, businesses or individuals in town who provide services that focus on specific subjects or activities (Tae Kwon Do classes, swimming lessons, dance studios, fitness centers, etc.), and even daycare centers in the Thibodaux area.

**Business Environment Overview**

The outlook on the business environment for the Office of Continuing Education has potential for improvement. The department has support from key personnel at the university that allow for utilization of facilities and resources needed to help ensure that programs run smoothly. Below is a SWOT analysis (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) of the environment in which the department operates.

**SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths:**

- Hardworking director and staff focused on aiding the continued enrichment and learning of the entire community.
- Offer a large selection of programs directed towards a number of specific subject areas.
- Have an excellent collection of knowledgeable and credible instructors that uphold the objectives of the department and of the university.
• Centrally located in Southeast Louisiana, which places it within a two-hour drive of the area where the department pulls much of its customer base from, making it logistically feasible to the surrounding area.

Weaknesses:

• Office is still in the process of expanding, so there are many changes and much catch-up work to be done- this is affecting the timing of mail outs and other important information.
• Need for ongoing training due to employee turnover at the end of each semester. New employees may initially affect departmental efficiency because he/she is not fully integrated with office procedures.
• The office procedure manual needs to be reassembled into basic procedures that would be easy for employees to learn.
• Department's financial budget is limited for marketing purposes, which hurts the amount of exposure the department gains throughout the community and surrounding areas.
• Department is wasting some valuable financial resources on programs that were not marketed well and are canceled due to lack of enrollment.
• Department has not been able to turn much, if any profit from the programs that are being provided as of yet.
• Although necessary, the director is often tied up in lengthy meetings. This places much of the responsibility of the daily running of the office on the camp coordinator and secretary, who are both still relatively new to the department

Opportunities:

• Self-improvement is becoming more of a focus in many communities across the state and country. The many programs the department offers (arts and crafts, dance, cooking, computers, finance, etc.) provide an outlet for these individuals to service this need.
• With increased exposure of the many programs that the department offers, it will give the department the opportunity to increase enrollment in the large customer-base of Southeast Louisiana.
• Have the ability to add new programs that have the potential to attract more business.
• Able to take advantage of market area because the majority of the department's most similar competitors are located a minimum of an hour drive away.

Threats:

• Since the economy has been experiencing a downturn, people may decide that is better economically for them to save money by not enrolling in some of the more personal-related programs.
• Local competitors gaining a competitive advantage over this department by offering full services in some of the same subject areas that the department does. Similar competitors (LSU, SLU, UNO, etc.) may also pull some of the visiting camp business away by being able to offer more physical capacity and superior facilities.

Marketing Objectives and Strategies

The financial resources that the Office of Continuing Education has available for marketing purposes continues to be somewhat limited. The marketing efforts of this department have focused primarily on continuous updating and direct mailings from our PeopleWare Pro database, and word-of-mouth advertising. However, the department has also explored other advertising options - specifically, newspaper, television, radio, and billboard advertising.
Objectives and Strategies

- **O-1** Establish market share for major market segment's (technical/business adult, hobby/personal adult, athletic youth, and education youth segments).
- **S-1** Utilize equipment/software to produce reports that categorize income and enrollment figures for the fiscal year by market segment - this will indicate which group marketing efforts would be better served.
- **O-2** Offer programs that will increase knowledge and help to enrich the community through intellectual and physical growth.
- **S-2** No programs that focus on topics relating to religious, governmental, or social and cultural issues of a questionable nature will be offered. Survey program attendees asking specifically about quality of instruction, level of satisfaction, and amount of increased knowledge. Open-ended comments on quality of class and amount of perceived enrichment and also suggestions on programs that could be added should be included in the survey.
- **O-3** Facilitate growth in programs and in the department by way of increased enrollment.
- **S-3** Encourage word-of-mouth advertising from individuals who are currently enrolled in one of our programs by offering an incentive (get three new enrollments in one of our programs and get a 10% discount on the next course enrolled in). Pursue new mediums to advertise through (e-mail, Internet, television, newspaper etc.)
- **O-4** Maintain up-to-date printed marketing materials.
- **S-4** Continue updating and dispensing the seasonal program booklets. Create brochures to be issued prior to the program's first scheduled meeting date. Create fliers consisting of small and large lists to handout or mail out.
- **O-5** Advanced notification to target market areas of the programs to be offered in the upcoming season.
- **S-5** Develop a calendar or timetable deadline for all mailings (seasonal booklets, brochures, and fliers).
- **O-6** Maintain good relations and encourage repeat attendance with current customers.
- **S-6** Send "Thank You" cards to program attendee and instructors. Possibly send holiday and birthday cards also.
- **O-7** Need to reduce the amount of classes that are canceled, due to lack of enrollment or some other variable, by 10%.
- **S-7** Look at key demographical information for the surrounding area to determine if the courses that are being offered are consistent with the characteristics of the market area. Consider setting a rotation for the programs that are offered for every season. Since the programs will only be offered once a year instead of every season, this should provide an incentive for individuals to enroll in the programs. If the individuals do not enroll in the program when it is offered, they will have to wait until it is offered again.