

ULM's pharmacy college opens satellite campus in Shreveport

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By Jordan Blum

jblum@thenewsstar.com

The University of Louisiana at Monroe officially unveiled its new pharmacy satellite campus Wednesday at LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport.

The ULM College of Pharmacy, setting up a permanent location in Shreveport with LSU, is the college's first tangible foray into becoming the state's true college of pharmacy, said Lamar Pritchard, ULM pharmacy dean.

"This is celebrating the collaboration of two programs," Pritchard said of the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "The ribbon was maroon and gold for ULM and then purple and gold all intertwined. It means we are officially fulfilling our role as the state's college of pharmacy now."

The new Shreveport facility is housing 12 mostly new ULM faculty members, classroom and laboratory space and 25 ULM clinical rotation students - with more in subsequent years - who also will work at LSU Medical Center in Shreveport.

The faculty needs time to get acclimated in their teaching in research, as well as their assistance at the hospital before more students are sent to Shreveport, Pritchard said.

ULM next plans to open a satellite campus in October with LSU in Baton Rouge, which was originally supposed to be at the LSUHSC at New Orleans, then open its new primary Monroe campus in December on Bienville Drive.

"We have a lot of irons in the fire that are going to allow us to expand our program," Pritchard said, all of which will help recruit more students to ULM and fight the pharmacist shortage.

Even though ULM will send students to Shreveport and Baton Rouge, they will spend their first few years at the Monroe campus before moving on into research and clinical rotations. Some of those students may still remain in Monroe by working at LSUHSC in Monroe -- the former E.A. Conway Hospital.

Fourth-year ULM pharmacy student Jessica Staples of Jonesboro said the collaboration means more hands-on learning opportunities in hospitals for the pharmacy students. "I think it's going to be a tremendous improvement in active learning. It's great to work in conjunction with hospitals ... and learn so much and see so many more things."

U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, who cut the maroon, purple and gold ribbon, said the satellite campus is great for ULM and the whole state because of the partnership with LSU it represents. "We survive by working together. The potential is good and the pharmacy program is doing great things."