1. Executive Summary

The Center for the Study of New Orleans is a cross-disciplinary resource hub that promotes research and reflection on the history, society, culture and environment of New Orleans. Its event series and academic minor comprise a unique scholarly center that studies a specific city.

2. Unit Identification or Profile Summary

2.1 Official name of the unit and the mission or purpose statement of the unit

The Center for the Study of New Orleans

Building on the scholarly resources of Loyola University New Orleans, the Center for the Study of New Orleans promotes research into the city’s history, culture and environment. The Center offers a full slate of public programs and courses. By integrating social justice and analytical thinking into all of its activities, the center fosters a critical understanding of New Orleans and provides opportunities to aid its renewal.

2.2 General statement and descriptive information concerning the unit

The Center for the Study of New Orleans, which opened in the fall of 2009, offers public programming on diverse subjects related to New Orleans and oversees an academic minor, New Orleans Studies.

The Center’s public programming draws New Orleanians to the Loyola campus for events and its academic minor encourages students to learn about the city in which they live.

2.2.1 Headcounts of full-time and part-time staff
2.2.2 Headcounts of faculty (if appropriate): tenured, tenure track, full-time extraordinary, and part-time adjunct
2.2.3 Headcounts of full-time and part-time undergraduate students (if appropriate)
2.2.4 Headcounts of full-time and part-time graduate students (if appropriate)
2.2.5 Retention rates of full-time degree-seeking students by program: fall-to-fall and fall-to-spring.
2.2.6 Graduation rates for entering students by cohort year by program.

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3. Assessment

3.1 General statement on how assessment is conducted within the unit (The unit’s assessment plan should be posted to its Intranet site)

The Center’s steering committee discusses each program and evaluates its success based on its content, the response of the audience, the size of the audience and feedback from audience members.

Members of the Center for the Study of New Orleans Steering Committee:

Mary Baudouin, Instructor, Jesuit Social Research Center
John Biguenet, Robert Hunter Distinguished University Professor
Dr. Barbara Ewell, Dorothy Harrell Brown Distinguished Professor of English
Dr. Justin Nystrom, Assistant professor, Department of History
Lisa Martin, Instructor, School of Mass Communication and Director, Center for Intercultural Understanding
Dr. Melanie McKay, Associate professor. Dept. of English and Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs
Patricia Nugent, Archivist, Monroe Library
Dr. Janna Saslaw, Associate professor of Music Theory
Dr. Robert Thomas, Professor, School of Mass Communication and Director, Center for Environmental Communication
Dr. Lydia Voigt, Distinguished University Professor and Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs

Director:
Dr. Leslie Parr, Professor, School of Mass Communication

The Center also offers the New Orleans Studies minor whose students complete an evaluation form about their courses.

3.2 Outline the unit's program goals for the previous year (include how these goals are strategic to both the unit’s and the university’s mission; these should be based on the unit’s strategic plan)

One of the goals of the current year included initiating the New Orleans Studies minor. The minor helps to foster a critical understanding of New Orleans and fits with the university’s commitment to “foster student connectedness to the University and the New Orleans community,” (Loyola 2012, p.2)

The Center and the minor speak directly to the university’s goal of developing new programs “emanating from our location in New Orleans…that are cross-disciplinary, interdepartmental, and inter-college…based on subject matter upon which no other University competes.” (Loyola 20112, p. 3)
Our other goal was to produce a series of public programs that fostered critical understanding of the city and bolstered the Jesuit values of the university community that demand a strong presence and connection to the city and its citizens. The programs helped fulfill the mission of Loyola to “prepare our graduates to take their place in this ever-changing world as competent, concerned, responsible members who will make a visible difference in New Orleans, their home community, their nation and the world.” (Loyola 2012, p. 2)

3.3 Outline the unit's student learning outcomes for the previous year

The academic year 2010-11 was the first year the New Orleans Studies minor was in place. Our committee will analyze their evaluation forms in the fall semester.

3.4 Describe the previous year’s assessment activities, both of internal (within Loyola) and external (outside Loyola) factors affecting the unit

No formal assessment has been conducted; however, evaluation of previous public programs by the steering committee guided the planning of topics, dates, advertising and speakers for future programs.

In determining the need for specific public programs and assessing their success, the committee looked at events and issues in the New Orleans community that would be of interest to New Orleans citizens and Loyola students and support our mission to foster “a critical understanding of the city” and provide “opportunities to aid its renewal.” We also aimed to support the university’s mission to prepare its students “to lead meaningful lives with and for others; to pursue truth, wisdom, and virtue; and to work for a more just world.”

Consequently, we planned a program that complemented the women’s studies minor and with a panel discussion highlighting the voluntary work of women in New Orleans’ history and in post-Katrina New Orleans. In keeping with our commitment to inter-disciplinary studies, we put together another scholarly program that was supported by women’s studies, environmental studies and the Center for Environmental Communication on climate change and the oil spill. In two other programs we investigated aspects of New Orleans’ culture: the city’s special relationship with the Saints football team and the importance of music in New Orleans popular culture and, in particular, in the Treme television portrayal of the city.

3.5 Describe the assessment of community-based learning, community-engaged activities, or community-related goals (if applicable)

While we had no formal assessment of community-related activities and goals, we worked with different community-based groups in developing our programs: Women of the Storm, One Greater New Orleans, the Broadmoor Improvement Association, writers for The Times-Picayune and the New York Times, The Gulf Restoration Network and local musicians all played roles in developing our programming.
3.6 Briefly describe the results found through the assessment of the previous year's program goals, student learning outcomes, and any community-related goals

Audience size and responses to our programs indicated that we filled a need in New Orleans and in the academic community for the kind of programming we offered.

4. Summary of Achievements
4.1 Unit as a whole

Public programs 2010-2011:

Fleur Delirious: New Orleans and the Saints
HBO’s Treme: Spotlight on Music
A Woman’s Work is Never Done: Rebuilding and Reforming New Orleans
The President’s Forum: Oil and Water: Spotlight on the Gulf
Talk by Mark Hertsgaard, author of Hot! Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth
“Rex: Inside the School of Design,” video, produced by the Center for the Study of New Orleans and the Center for Arts and Music Entrepreneurship
“Frank Ehret, Jr., Louisiana Conservationist,” video produced by the Center for the Study of New Orleans. The Center for Environmental Communication and the Center for Arts and Music Entrepreneurship

We began offering courses for the New Orleans minor in the fall of 2010. A total of 16 courses were offered during the academic year and five during the summer.

4.2 Faculty achievements/service (if appropriate)
Achievements of the faculty on our steering committee can be found in their departmental reports. All members of the steering committee contributed to formulating the minor and to the success of our public programs. The following members of the steering committee played significant roles in specific programs: Dr. Robert A. Thomas moderated the “Oil and Water” program, Dr. Janna Saslaw moderated the “Treme” program and Professor Lisa Martin moderated “Fleur Delirious.”

Dr. Thomas also interviewed Dr. Stephen Hales for the video, “Rex: Inside the School of Design,” and Frank Ehret, Jr. for the video, “Frank Ehret, Jr., Louisiana Conservationist.”

4.3 Staff achievements/service
4.4 Student achievements (if appropriate)
4.5 Community engagement achievements (if appropriate)

5. Budget for previous year and upcoming year's goals (2 pages max)
5.1 Previous FY salary, operating, and total budgets. Budget actuals will be provided by the Office of Institutional Research and supplied to the college deans and division vice presidents for dissemination their respective departments.

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We did not receive any new funds for this academic year. We used funds remaining from last year’s budget.

5.1.1 Previous FY budget discussion (Provide a narrative of the previous year's budget and spending, including an assessment of the adequacy of the budget to 1) support and operate the unit and 2) support the unit's strategic goals.)

For the academic year 2010-2011 we spent $6,503 on programming, advertising and related expenses. We managed to keep our expenditures down by reducing the amount of advertising, using more local people in our programs and by co-sponsoring with the President’s office on one program that we did not have to pay for. We also co-sponsored a speaker with Tulane’s Institute on Water Resources, Law and Policy, which paid for most of the program. We managed to fulfill our goal of providing significant programming to Loyola and the greater New Orleans community, but scant funds made it a challenge.

5.2 Upcoming FY salary, operating and total budgets. Provide expected budget if the unit’s budget hasn't been finalized.

Estimated budget: $10,000-20,000

5.2.1 Upcoming FY budget discussion (Provide a narrative of the upcoming year's budget and expected spending, including an assessment of the adequacy of the budget to 1) support and operate the unit and 2) support the unit's strategic goals.)

We have not yet been given a final operating budget, but we have been assured of at least $10,000, the amount we estimate that we will need to put on our first major event of 2011-12, “Food for Thought,” a scholarly symposium, roundtable and festival slated for Sept. 30.

With increased funds we could broaden the scope of the Center to include such activities as sending students and faculty to scholarly conferences, funding a scholar in residence and inviting more speakers to campus. All of these activities would accord with the Loyola 2012 Implementation Plan’s goal to “enhance reputation and stature” by promoting faculty-student undergraduate research and enhancing academic programs.

6. Planning and goals for the upcoming year (2 pages max)
6.1 General statement describing the process of strategic planning in the unit and how the strategic plan has informed the development of the upcoming year's goals. (The current strategic plan should be posted on the unit’s Intranet site.)

Next year we will continue our goal of providing public programming that promotes research into the city’s history, culture, society and environment. As we have funds guaranteed for only one event, further planning will have to wait until we receive our final budget figures.
Out first event will be the first of an annual series called NOLALoyola that celebrates and explores New Orleans culture and society. The inaugural event, “Food for Thought,” spotlights New Orleans’ unique contribution to cuisine. We will hold a scholarly symposium with papers that will be published by the Walker Percy Center and present a roundtable discussion in the evening with noted New Orleans chefs.

We will also work with Debra Danna, director of International Education, to establish a certificate program in New Orleans Studies for exchange students and to link New Orleans Studies faculty and students with relevant programs abroad.

6.2 Describe how the unit’s strategic plan supports the mission or strategic goals of the university.

Our mission to build on the scholarly resources of Loyola in order to promote research into the city’s history, culture, society and environment supports the university’s mission “to educate the whole student and to benefit the larger community.”

6.3 Describe the program goals for the upcoming year. (Indicate how assessment during the previous year has been used to inform the development of the upcoming year's goals.)

Our “Food for Thought” complements Loyola’s strategic goal to “foster student connectedness to the University and the New Orleans community” (Loyola 2012, p.2) and its aim to enhance Loyola’s reputation and stature.

The international certificate and exchange program supports Loyola 2012’ s goal to internationalize the university. (Loyola 2012, p.7)

6.4 Describe the student learning outcomes for the upcoming year. (Indicate how assessment during the previous year has been used to inform the development of the upcoming year's goals.)

In the fall semester we will analyze the New Orleans Studies student evaluation forms from this spring (the first time we used an evaluation document) and determine student-learning objectives now that we have experienced one academic year of New Orleans Studies courses.

6.5 Description of planned involvement of non-Loyola community in strategic goals or the activities planned to achieve those goals, such as community-based learning, community-engaged activities, or community-related goals (if applicable)

We will continue to consult local experts in relation to our programming.

6.6 Description of the resources that will support the goals for the upcoming year
The faculty on the Center for the Study of New Orleans steering committee will again actively pursue our goals and play a crucial role in planning and executing our programs.

6.7 Assessment plan for upcoming year's goals

All of our assessment thus far has been done during in-depth discussions in steering committee meetings. Now that we have completed two years of successful programming, we are ready to enhance our goals and plan for the future. One of our goals for next year is to write a specific strategic plan that will help guide our activities.

7. Appendices

7.1 Data collection tools for student data (Provide a copy of any tools that the unit uses to collect data about student achievement, such as senior exit exams, student learning outcome rubrics for courses, interview protocols for graduating seniors, etc.)

7.2 Data collection tools for other data (Provide a copy of any other tools the unit might use to collect data not listed in 7.1)

7.3 Assessment reports (At the unit’s discretion, provide a copy of any assessment reports that the unit has generated as a result of the previous year’s assessment activities)

7.4 Any supporting documentation the unit sees fit to include in the annual report