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## University alumnus promoted to BR director of business development

(Source: [LSU Reveille](#))

With almost 10 days under his belt in his new position as director of business development for the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, University graduate Ryan Cooney is already getting down to business.

Cooney began his work with BRAC as an intern during his senior year and transitioned to project manager after graduating in 2008. The city of Baton Rouge contracts economic development services to BRAC. In his new position, Cooney said he will manage that contract, which includes helping to keep and grow local businesses and recruiting new businesses to the parish.

"Those businesses are economic driver industries — those which have the majority of their revenue derived from sources outside of the parish — such as manufacture, warehouse and distribution, digital media and software firms," Cooney said. "It engulfs a wide variety of industry."

The most recent project involving the student population is BRAC's work with Electronic Arts. The video game company will relocate its testing center from LSU's South Campus to the main campus in the Center for Computation and Technology and will be incorporating the AVATAR initiative, which will recruit faculty to research video game design and other digital art forms, beginning in October 2012.

As a young professional in a competitive industry, Cooney said his new position calls for more responsibility. He works with the Mayor's Office and the Metro Council routinely and is charged with responding to their needs and understanding what comes out of significant face-to-face interactions with the clients.

"It requires a great deal of time management and patience, and I have to be proactive to maintain continuity with everyone," Cooney said. "Juggling different roles and angles requires you to be organized in a lot of what you do."

Originally from Mobile, Ala., Cooney came to Baton Rouge as a University student in landscape architecture. He shifted to the E.J. Ourso College of Business after his first year when he found himself more engaged in projects with a direct impact on the community.

Cooney said he was involved at the University, finding a place in Student Government.

"I came to Baton Rouge from Mobile knowing five people," Cooney said. "When I set foot on campus I had to engage myself in the city and what was going on in the community."

Because of Baton Rouge's history in heavy manufacturing and industrial business and the multitude of students graduating from surrounding colleges and universities,

Cooney said the city has seen a growth of advanced technologies in manufacturing and digital media software.

"Baton Rouge has been through a lot of growing pains, specifically over the last 10 years, in a positive manner," he said. "With a population growth and infrastructure changes, LSU and the students can play an active role, knowing that the city itself and the University really do rely on each other."

Cooney said he would advise University business students to be involved in student organizations and seek mentors on campus.

"There is a wide variety of people I've met in my time here that are more than willing to have lunch with me or spend time with me and feed me advice," he said. "There is always an opportunity for that, for extending yourself and not being afraid to ask questions." Cooney said he was anxious after graduation about making the right decisions but was excited to begin the new step in his first job.

"I was nervous, but having the confidence that you can perform the work that is required really is the key to that success," he said.

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