

# 139. Looking Back at 2025: Louisiana Tech's Year in Review

## **Gavin Kelly**

Hey, everybody you're listening to beyond 1894 this is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. My name is Gavin Kelly from the Office of University Communications, and our CO hosts for this episode, also from the Office of University Communications, are CAMI geisman, Teddy Allen, same crew from last year, if you were lucky enough to join us for the 2024 Year in Review. Episode, this is our 2025 year interview episode. We're going to be looking back at some highlights and some big stories from the past year here at Louisiana Tech. But first things first, if you're listening on release day or anytime near it, Merry Christmas.

## **Cami Geisman**

Yeah, Merry Christmas. It we're coming to you live on Christmas Eve. Be alive. Yeah, we're dedicated.

## **Gavin Kelly**

We made a specific journey to campus here to record this for you. On Christmas Eve,

## **Cami Geisman**

surprisingly warm here on Christmas Eve, Fireside Chat. Vibe, yes, right in Wiley tower, Teddy.

## **Teddy Allen**

I got another I brought Christmas ornaments. Yeah, we're staring at Christmas Santa Claus as we'll talk about some sports later on, but yeah,

## **Gavin Kelly**

genuinely, we hope that you're have had a good Christmas. Are looking forward to a good Christmas. Happy New Year. All that good stuff from us here at Louisiana Tech University Communications to you. Thank you for listening. First of all, if you've if this is your first episode, or if you've been a loyal listener throughout the year, we've had some good guests on. So if this is your first episode, go back and check out some of the guests we've had on over the year. A lot of the stories we're going to mention today have a corresponding guest and goes into that story a little bit more in depth. But let's kick things off. All of

## **Teddy Allen**

those episodes are much better than Yeah, sorry if this your first time tuning in. You have made jump on those other ones, and they're very good, very good.

## **Gavin Kelly**

Yeah, they're awesome while we're while we're currently bragging on ourselves right now, yeah, let's continue to do that. Let's talk about some of the ways University Communications has kind of made the an impact. And then the way we set out, we've had

**Cami Geisman**

a big year, yeah, like a big year. We have, we have done probably as much as we possibly could. We launched a new university website, which, if you think about all that goes into a university website, it was, it was

**Gavin Kelly**

a, don't think about it. Yeah, you're listening. Don't think about it. The people you know, latech.edu by the way. So we're talking the whole, that whole operation has been revamped. People see what happens when you go live, right when you press the Launch button. People see what the website looks like. That had to come from somewhere. It was a long time like it took a long

**Cami Geisman**

time a lot of work, a lot of great folks contributing to content. And really it's, you know, our way of marketing the university to everyone who's not here in Ruston. And so we hope a bunch of potential students are seeing a potential faculty, and that's where we put all of our news stories, so you can keep up with what's going on at Tech on that beautiful new website with pretty pictures and cool graphics

**Teddy Allen**

and has bites. Yeah, it's all the stuff, yeah. And seriously, if you go to like, a little league game or big league soccer game or football game, and everything striped and pretty. And you think just the magic else come and did that. Somebody was out there early striping the field. And I saw these people at work doing this website. It was, it was just tough, but they got it done, and it's still improving. It and and it's awesome. It's more you to make

**Gavin Kelly**

it easier for any project. Yeah, yeah,

**Cami Geisman**

it's never done, but I do recommend checking out and trying to find a page that doesn't exist. So you can see the 404 page and see precious techie telling you you have found a page that doesn't exist, because it's

**Gavin Kelly**

just a picture of a tired tech 22 just waiting for you if you happen to find a

**Cami Geisman**

missing page. So yeah, the website that was a big project, and then we relaunched the 1894 magazine,

**Gavin Kelly**

worth noting too, that one of them was done concurrently with the magazine. I mean, with the website, one of the magazines was done while we were working on the

**Cami Geisman**

Yes, yes, we didn't get a summer break, I'll tell you that, but that's okay. We there's good things happening. So yeah, in February, our first edition of the magazine came out and really talked about the vision of the institution where we are today, where we're hoping to go, of course, featuring our sweet tech 22 and then our second edition, our fall edition came out in October, featuring our incredibly beautiful freshman class and tech 22

**Gavin Kelly**

it's a cheat code to put, yeah, a live, adorable Bulldog that everybody loves in every photo and on the cover of every magazine you got them, you're gonna.

**Teddy Allen**

You're gonna fall on it iconic, yes.

**Cami Geisman**

And as long as we have our I have influence over this magazine, tech will be on tech.

**Teddy Allen**

You'll be there, this person, this guy, so easy to get along with. He loves everybody. Comes the ball game. Yeah, he knows, he knows his place. He knows what's up. You'll see him riding in the car. You know, he just hop out of bed and do that. I mean, he has to get fixed up a little bit. But guys got game 24/7, and as far as this printed magazine from an old printed media guy, think Dr Henderson, our president, brought back the importance of the printed mag that you see in the doctor's office or in the waiting room or wherever on your table at home, it's really good looking. A lot of good stuff in I just appreciate that he did that, because a lot of the alums missed the mag and and it's a it's a top shelf production, and

**Cami Geisman**

if you're not getting the magazine in your mailbox, the easiest way to do that is by joining the Alumni Association, and then you're guaranteed one will come to your door

**Gavin Kelly**

and you don't want to miss we're current. We're working on the next one. Yeah, let's just be there's one on the way the winter, technically right edition of the magazine will come out next year, right before our spring quarter kind of starts here.

**Cami Geisman**

So, and we're already cranking out stories for that, and they're, they're great and interesting.

**Gavin Kelly**

See on the lookout, yeah, but yeah, big year for university communications here at Louisiana Tech, as I mentioned to the Beyond 1894 podcasts, we had a fun year with a lot of good guests on and a lot of those stories, again, supplement the magazine. So at the end, I think the podcast too was kind of started with the intent of being a kind of a handholded type thing for the magazine too, to go along with it, but it's kind of grown since then. But we're here on Beyond 1894 and we're going to get into some more of what might what made this year great

**Cami Geisman**

beyond magazines and and you see the beautiful imagery coming out of our shop. Emmy McIntyre does an incredible job all the graphics. We have incredible graphic designers. So I just want to honor the the work that goes into telling stories here at Tech, and the other way we do that is through video. And we have had some, you know, great videos, some great quad talks and all that. But Gavin, what do you have a highlight video this year that you

**Gavin Kelly**

were Yeah, I think, I think we all know that we have to talk about one recently around Halloween. So we had a, we had a special circumstance for Halloween this year in that it was our homecoming. And it was not just any homecoming. It was the 100th homecoming at Louisiana Tech. And so thinking of ways to celebrate homecoming, but also kind of play into the Halloween aspect of it. And there was a there was a fun video that came out of that featuring Dr Henderson and two champs, one of whom is questionable. Might be a zombie. We saw.

**Cami Geisman**

We all know what's going on with that, but that was

**Gavin Kelly**

a good that was a fun way to kind of kick off those homecoming festivities. And that Halloween weekend,

**Cami Geisman**

it was a lot of fun, and the dogs wore black for the first time, versus Sam Houston, who wore orange. So it

**Gavin Kelly**

was a real Yeah, how do you not like, I'm thankful that that worked out the way it was supposed to. Because, like, I think as soon as it was like, this games on Halloween, everyone's mind was immediately like, how do we make this a black and orange game? And it worked out.

**Teddy Allen**

Tip the ball cap to Sam Houston for playing along. They worked with us on the date. Of course, their their jerseys are generally purple and gold. They changed it to orange for this game. That's not true. They're blue and orange, but they're a good group over there. I love my folks at Sam Houston, and they wore all orange. And I was skeptical about the all black jerseys. Let me tell you something, those things are money. Oh yeah, Johnny Cash only person I can think of that did it better than this bunch, just the

by itself, a player are in a group, it looked spectacular, and the white numbers just popped out and and plus Bulldogs won by four or five touchdowns. I wish they'd wear them every game.

**Cami Geisman**

Yeah, the state T on that black helmet. Beautiful, beautiful.

**Gavin Kelly**

And you know, you mentioned that they got a win in those uniforms. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe there's some good Juju in those uniforms. And we hope, if so, that that kicks in here in a few days, because maybe they'll wear them again.

**Teddy Allen**

You can't buy these jerseys, by the way, yeah,

**Cami Geisman**

a lot of them are sold. A lot of them are game worn. Jerseys are sold, but they are not being sent out till after the season, and we have one more game and so, right?

**Teddy Allen**

But if you want one, you go to LATech sports.com for all your sports needs, they do a great job. By the way, we've talked about our people in Harley who I don't know how she does all these videos. It's fascinating me without getting her finger in the lens or something, but she works hard. But over at LATech sports.com everything you want to know about your athletic teams, they got a good crew. Said they're beautiful

**Gavin Kelly**

on the subject of wearing black uniforms for one last game. It's funny, because for this podcast last year, we were talking about playing in the independence ball, our football team playing in the independence ball. But that kind of was sheer coincidence, right? Like it kind of the cards kind of fell. Yeah, we weren't supposed to get a bowl game, and we got a bowl game, and so we were thankful for that, but the Bulldogs worked real hard this year to earn a spot in the bowl game again, and we're going to be in the independence ball, right?

**Teddy Allen**

Teddy. Bulldogs won three of their last five. Won their last two, won that homecoming game by a bunch, and so they'll take a seven and five record into the radiance technologies independence. But we love the eyeball. We're the team that's been the in the eyeball, the most 49 year history. The 11th is second,

**Gavin Kelly**

the 11th, oldest bowl game in the century.

**Teddy Allen**

Eyeball, all the time, God Almighty, and it's still standing after and I remember the first one, and it's still there. And the people that run it, it's a all year thing, the communities involved. This year we'll see some

of the people that same people we've seen for 3035, years over there at the bowl. It means a lot to them. It's it does a lot for the community. So can't wait December 30.

**Gavin Kelly**

1pm Good afternoon game.

**Cami Geisman**

And really cool with the independence bowl is that radiance technologies is one of our is the present sponsor, and they are probably our most cherished partner. They're great company out of Huntsville, but who has been partnering with Louisiana Tech for a decade and a half now, and we can look back in August, where the governor came to tech to make a huge announcement with Louisiana economic development and radiance and our foundation that they are building a microchip manufacturing facility here in Ruston. So through partnership with them, through our incredible faculty who help with their research and development, or the Institute for micro manufacturing, they will be able to employ a bunch of people in a lot of great jobs here in Ruston, Louisiana. Yeah, that's really exciting.

**Gavin Kelly**

And, you know, with a good for national defense, like, it's not just this is it's a good thing for us and and for our region, but this, it's gonna affect

**Teddy Allen**

the whole country. That's right. Thank you to CEO Bill Bailey, who loves Louisiana Tech. Yeah, we're proud of him. He's proud of the university. It's a great relationship, yeah?

**Cami Geisman**

So that was it, that was, may or be our biggest news story of the year, was, yeah,

**Gavin Kelly**

that's a big that's a lot of as with a lot of things. You know, it's going to take time to build and see the, see the yeah, see the dollars, but it's going to be a lot of dollars.

**Cami Geisman**

Yeah. And it starts with workforce development. So we're already looking at how we get the faculty and scholarships for to attract students here to work those jobs when they do arrive. And we see so many of our students who come here just for college, but they want to stay. It's a great community, great quality of life here. And so it's exciting that we're going to have 150 great paying jobs that our alums will be able to fill. So that's really cool. And just the in North Louisiana, the growth in industry the past year, not just in Ruston, but in Monroe, and east of there and to our west. So it's exciting time to be in North Louisiana. Yeah, and we're talking about

**Gavin Kelly**

growth, it's a good time to talk about campus growth too. We had, we had a kind of segment on this on the podcast for this episode last year too. And a lot of those projects that we mentioned were really early on and are now a lot deeper into their development. But we've also got new projects that are

about to be in their early stages. So let's talk about some of the facilities and campus enhancements that are happening here at

**Cami Geisman**

Louisiana Tech. Yeah, if you've come to joy stadium this season, you've seen the progress by our our video board, where the origin bank Center for Student Athlete success is going up lot of concrete, lot of steel, but it's going to be a beautiful building that that closes in that bowl and gives our student athletes the space and support they need. Our athletes give a lot to this university a lot of their time, so anyway, we can support them and make their academic journey even better. I think it's a great win. And then the other one is our forest products Innovation Center on South Campus, and it's also coming right along, lot of, once again, a lot of concrete. But we'll, we'll be seeing those cross laminated timber walls going up in February, and it's gonna be beautiful wood. So it's a lot of wood.

**Gavin Kelly**

It's very unique the building. The design of the building is mostly wood. A lot of the load bearing parts of the structure are made of wood.

**Cami Geisman**

Yeah, it's gonna be beautiful. And there's me a lot of good work coming out of the that center where industry has stepped up to support the building of it. Because they see the promise it holds in I'm looking out the window at a lot of trees, yeah. And so we're in the piney woods, that's right. And so just making timber more profitable is is the the end goal, and I think we'll be able to achieve that.

**Gavin Kelly**

So and bolstering our our forestry program, which is already pretty stout, very produces a lot of the graduates in a region where forestry and wood products is a driver, an economic

**Cami Geisman**

driver, and forestry is one of our fast our growing programs. You know, in the fall, we look at how programs are growing, degree majors are growing, and they had double digit growth this year. So there's an interest in forestry for this next generation coming in, which is exciting, because we have trees, lots

**Teddy Allen**

of trees, a lot comes back to wood.

**Gavin Kelly**

I think you can say that about most things, right to me, and all you know, I mentioned two projects that are in very early stages. Let's talk about George T Madison Hall, a building that's been needing a lot of love for a long time now, if you're listening and you've been on campus at all, or if you've been a student here, you're probably familiar with George T Mason Hall, because it hasn't changed in a long time, and it is a building that every student on campus pretty much has to set foot in for a class or more at some point in their college career. So I feel like for years now, GTM has been on, on the docket for

improvement, been in line, and people have known it's coming, but now it's so close, we can taste it, because they've already moved everyone out of the building.

**Cami Geisman**

Yeah, the state legislature stepped up big on George T Madison and supporting a \$45 million renovation on that building. And that's our Chief Academic Building. Like Gavin said, everyone has to take a class in there. And we're gonna, it's gonna be elevated to a modern learning environment that is worthy of these our students. And it'll be, you know, an 18 month project. So optimistically, we'll, we'll be opening that building back up in late, early winter 2027, is hopefully what we're looking at. But we have to acknowledge the work it took to move out of that building. Yeah. I mean, entire departments, offices is one thing, but we had to find space on this campus for 170 class sections. And when you think about that displacing all of those people, and the inconvenience that Tech family stepped up big, had good attitudes, and it's on the other side, it's gonna be worth it, and it's really exciting.

**Gavin Kelly**

Quite a few of those folks here in Wiley. Yeah.

**Cami Geisman**

Welcome to Wiley tower, to the College of Liberal Arts, yeah,

**Gavin Kelly**

they not a, logistically, not an enviable position to be in, and they're gonna have to be rough in it for a little while, but then they're gonna have some of the nicest, yeah, facilities on campus. It'll be, it'll all be worth it, yep, so looking forward to a new and improved George T Madison Hall. And if you're listening, and like I said, have been on campus, and know what George T Madison Hall was like? Come back when it's done, it's probably gonna be a bit of a culture shock, a little funeral for the building. Yeah, hibernation celebration was, I think, what they called it probably

**Cami Geisman**

shouldn't call it a funeral that

**Teddy Allen**

wasn't very new. If only Carl puja, I could have thought of something like that, of liberal arts, but if you've forgotten history, English, math is the main things over there, and that's why everybody, that's why every student is in there a lot. Yeah, everyone will be worth the wait. It's, we've seen the yes plans, the renderings, you know, I love a rendering. And it's gonna be, it's gonna be something special, yeah,

**Gavin Kelly**

looking forward to that. Also the it's an interesting logistical, I was gonna say nightmare, maybe a little bit too, because it's in such a central part of campus that the logistics of operating on the building a section at a time, and you know, this part of campus, you won't be able to walk on or drive on while this part of the building is being worked on, and that sort of on and that sort of thing. It's just, it's all very meticulous. And also it's worth mentioning that, as with everything else, it will disrupt parking, yeah?



**Cami Geisman**

Parking every college campus's favorite subject, yeah, we

**Gavin Kelly**

will just say that there hit construction is underway on a parking deck, a multi layer parking deck here at Louisiana Tech, yep, yes, that's real, and it is maybe a Christmas miracle a little bit, but it's gonna turn one of our lots here into by and large, the biggest campus Over 500 500

**Cami Geisman**

space is right on West Mississippi. It's going to be, yeah, a great parking deck for residential students as well as commuters and so, yeah, I think that will definitely ease the challenge of parking. But I don't think we'll ever move beyond we'll never have enough. They will never have enough. I. We'll never have it. We call it Princess parking in my house, where you get that first parking spot and like, Oh, we got Princess parking. Yeah, everyone wants Princess parking, but sometimes we got to use our legs, yeah.

**Gavin Kelly**

And also, also, like, pardon our progress to a little bit right? The the parking deck being built means that the lot that it's in that already had quite a few spaces is completely out of commission, so we've turned the Railroad Avenue bike lane into some side street parking for our students, trying to alleviate some of that. So we appreciate everybody bearing with us as parking woes continue to shift into maybe a little bit more of an optimistic situation, keep in

**Teddy Allen**

mind, it's the first world problem. Yeah, we're sitting up here in Wiley tower doing this, and I'm looking at all the places I walked when I was a student. If you're a student, or you have a grandchild or child going here, I'm a testament that you can make it walking. It was a long time before I could buy a truck that's walked all over the place, and it's good for you. And you can, you can do it. We do get spoiled. Yeah, I love a good parking spot. You know, we can make it.

**Gavin Kelly**

The Alma Mater says pleasant walks and noble trees, nice drives, pleasant spot. Anyway. Yes, that's worth mentioning too, because I was telling you guys this yesterday, whenever we announced that parking garage is being built, and that the changes in parking were coming here short term. We announced that on our university social media, the Facebook comments, there are people saying things like, we want something like this back in 1985 and so like, it's not a new it's not a new concern that people have, and it's not a just here problem,

**Cami Geisman**

but it's a problem that doesn't get better if, because we are growing in enrollment. We have more people coming on campus. Which is, which is the goal. We had a great fall enrollment. I think 12,045 is our number right now of fall enrollment. And you know what differentiates us from a lot of campuses is those are mostly traditional students. So that's 10 1000s of students are here in Ruston on campus. The others are some online, but some dual enrollment students in high school as well. But is our largest

domestic class ever. More Louisianians here at Louisiana Tech than ever before, which we're really proud of. We want to educate Louisianians and have them stay here. That's that's the ultimate goal. And so we're really proud of fall enrollment. We talked about some I talked about forestry growing, but we also, I think nursing grew by 20%

**Gavin Kelly**

shout out to the RN to BSN program. It's still kind of new. Yeah, being able to get a four year degree here in nursing is pretty big. I think

**Cami Geisman**

Aviation Management grew 46% I mean, just some

**Gavin Kelly**

some aviation program that's already, you know, capped out, mostly

**Cami Geisman**

busting at the scene. Yes, I had a conversation yesterday hoping to get some more planes soon to nice to be able to expand that same with nursing and investment nursing, to hopefully be able to accept more nursing students to fill that need in our state.

**Gavin Kelly**

So yeah, it's good to see the programs growing where the like, the tangible evidence of how it's gonna slot into the needs of the state in the country are so obvious. So yeah, that's big time that the and the enrollment growth we mentioned is part of an upward trend that wasn't a one time thing. Last year we talked about a record setting freshman class. The year before that, we had a record setting freshman class like it just keeps, just keeps happening.

**Cami Geisman**

Third consecutive year, largest enrollment since 2018 and you know, retention is great too. We're keeping those students here so they're continuing. So we're really proud of where we are, but we're not stopping either. We're going to continue that trajectory of growth. Looking at just last month, tooting, university comes horn again. We developed a packet to send to the highest achieving students in our state, and Dr Anderson hand signed over 3000 letters in the month of November that he sent out to those students. And now they're coming, and they're visiting campus, and they meet with him. And so we believe that the the rigor that Tech offers is one that is attractive to students, the learning environment is one that's attractive to those high achieving students. So we're excited to welcome more of those students here at Louisiana Tech to

**Gavin Kelly**

to learn, absolutely, be shepherded, yeah. And also, I mean, if you're a regular listener of this podcast, you've heard it talked about 100 times genuinely, because it just, it is the feeling everyone has, where the phrase feels like home gets tossed around all the time. And you know, if one or two people are saying it to be one thing, but you talk to anyone who's been a student here, who's especially if they've come across state lines or something, and it's like, well, how? Why? Why was tech to school for you?

Like, well, as soon as I just came to campus, it just felt like home, yeah, and that's that's people who have been here understand that, and people who are here understand that. So I think that also has something to do with the reason we're able to attract these students to Louisiana. Tech.

**Cami Geisman**

Right. So once we get them here, we try to help them graduate, right? Get them to the Yeah,

**Gavin Kelly**

that's true. That's the goal, I guess. And we fastest time to degree, yeah, in the state, that's right. If you come to Louisiana, tech, you're going to get out of here with a degree in your hand quicker than anywhere else.

**Cami Geisman**

So we, we had some some fun commencement ceremonies this year. You know, one of the big things we've had in the past couple years is streamers, and it's always questionable if they're going to go off at the right time, if they're going to miss fire, whatever it is. Well, I'll tell you our most recent graduation. We finally, there were no there were no issues. They went off the red and blue. Streamers just

**Gavin Kelly**

normally, they pop like they're supposed to. But, yeah, you know, you can't you plan, you plan, you game plan for what you can control on game day, and then you try to execute on the field. And you know, you just prepare for to expect the unexpected. Worth mentioning, too. We're talking about graduation. Spring graduation, of course, is always the big one. We got to split that into two sessions. We had a couple non traditional students graduated spring graduation this year.

**Cami Geisman**

There were some sweet stories out of that we had. Mr. Harry may got his doctorate in engineering at late 70s. Yeah, I think. And he said, You know what, I'm not I'm not done learning yet. So he's not even he's already looking at what he can do next. And that's inspiring.

**Gavin Kelly**

And then it's especially aspiring for our university president, right? Because Dr May, one of his reasons for being a part of the Tech family at all is because of Dr Henderson's dad. Yeah. So, yeah,

**Cami Geisman**

that was really cool. We found out that Clem Henderson had told Harry may he need to come to tech and get a college degree, and he hadn't contemplated even going to college before that. And here he is. Was handed, handed his doctorate by Clem Henderson's son. That is really, really cool. And then we had sweet Miss Loretta Wiley, who got her Master's in Counseling, if I remember correctly, and walked across the stage with the assistance of a walker and to a standing ovation, absolutely well deserved. Yeah, and it was a chill inducing for sure. And you can't

**Gavin Kelly**

script those kind of things on graduation. They just people, people, people understand what a moment like that means. Yeah. And every moment like every person who walks across state of graduation has some variation of that moment, it should be special for everyone. So So we work hard to do that here,

**Cami Geisman**

and champ gave out a degree at the last one that was interesting. And so we'll see more of that. And we had some great speakers and Board of Regents chair Misty Cordell. We had Representative Barbara Freiburg, and alumnus, who's an educator in Baton Rouge, and so some good folks. And then Sonya ho got the tower medallion. Teddy you were, you were watching,

**Teddy Allen**

she's the original lady texture, the Queen th the mother of everybody who's every female student athlete who's dribbled through here, but back in the early 70s, when Title Nine was passed, and then then tech President FJ Taylor asked Coach Hogue to beat to become coach Hogue, and she agreed with two basketballs, and that was about they had the gym over there, and that was about it. But generations of women who've been able to play ball, and they've excelled in sports, and that's that's helped them after college, they owe a lot of a tribute, a tip of the cap to to coach Hogue, is the foundation of that. It was not an easy time for her, you know, she didn't know what was going on, and she she built it. And I was here when it happened. It was a fascinating thing to watch.

**Gavin Kelly**

Yeah, yeah, no. Lady textures. Without her, nothing. Putting it mildly, she

**Teddy Allen**

did interviews on the television, on the radio, and we talked to her. She cried every time. And it was, it means a bunch to her. It meant a tremendous amount. She's, you know, Lizzie eSports, Hall of Fame, and some and the nice, she's in a bunch of things. This, I think, truly meant more to her than anything. To get this tower medallion, it's the, the highest thing the university can give you, and she certainly earned it. Yeah, it's a special

**Gavin Kelly**

we don't just hand those out. No,

**Cami Geisman**

no, so I think, I mean, it's been a great year. I don't have any complaints. Gavin, do you have any complaints?

**Gavin Kelly**

Well, some but we're not. We talk about Festivus. You know, Seinfeld reference, you air the grievances for Festivus. And we do have a Festivus poll University Communications Office for several years running now. So the year we're, like I said, we talked about the independence ball already, but if you're listening around the time this episode comes out, it's still coming up, so make sure you tune in. But also, to bring it back around to athletics for a little bit, we do have to talk about switching conferences. Oh, shoot, yeah,

there's this other good news,

**Cami Geisman**

and I guess that we're looking forward to next year, I guess is what.

**Teddy Allen**

Yeah, two or three times a day. This is not exaggeration about, are we really going the Sun Belt, you know? And I said, I think so. Yeah. I mean, we've already, they announced the non conference schedule this week. So which is a good it's Northwestern. Comes here, old friends. And you go to, where do we go? She the school in Baton Rouge, and then Baylor, and then army comes here. Tremendously wonderful day for the university and for Ruston. We love army. Got to play him last year in the eyeball and and some lucky student athletes will get to go there, in theory, in 2035 spectacular setting to play ball up in army, but anyway, that it's going to be a lot easier for our fans to get to Lafayette, Monroe, Hattiesburg, those places then, then we were going to Conference USA. And people talk bad about Conference USA, but I remember when the school went to conference yesterday, and it was a big deal. They've been good to us, you know, and and hopefully we can part as winners in the eyeball against future Sun Belt Conference opponent, my homeboys, the Myrtle Beach Chanticleers, the Coastal Carolina people who's just like one building when I was a boy growing up over there. So happy about what they've done. So we got the Sun Belt going on. We want to thank all the alums who have invested in legacy Plaza, which opened a couple of weeks ago. And the I'm not a big statue guy, but the statues of coach a and Max and lambrot look like Coach these

**Gavin Kelly**

days, but those are one to one replicas.

**Cami Geisman**

After the last home game. I was sticking around, and I looked over we had just opened the plaza, and all of the players were meeting their families out there post game celebration, you know, saying hello and and I just seen those players in uniform standing under those giants. It was a beautiful moment. And it's a beautiful Plaza, and so I'm glad you brought that up. So, yeah, go visit it right outside the deck. Absolutely.

**Gavin Kelly**

And we talk about football, and you know, the impact of what a move to the Sun Belt means on traveling and all that. But you also think about the other teams here that have, you know, dozens of games. You think about basketball, baseball, softball, soccer teams that have to play more games, not any harder, better or worse, but just more games a year than football. That's a lot of travel too. It improves the

**Cami Geisman**

quality of life of our student athletes. They'll spend more time in the classroom than they will on a bus or on a plane. And so I think we have a calculation that our student athletes are saving 66 hours of travel

time per athlete with this move. And that also translates to finances too, because we're saving money on travel for there too. So I think, all in all, it's going to be great for the fans, great for the student athletes, great for the department. So yeah, goal, days ahead,

**Gavin Kelly**

goal of summer 2026 right, to make the to make the official switch. That's the goal. We've accepted the invite.

**Cami Geisman**

So latest it would be is 2027, beautiful.

**Teddy Allen**

I have one more. I know I'm just arm candy here and I'm supposed to be talking. But one more thing before I guess we close with giving day and any other final comments y'all have, but Ryan Ivey's athletic director, he will have been here two years come February. Yep, and you see the guy on game day. He's probably got pretty good tickets to the game, stuff like that. But trust me, the rest of his life is his phone ringing and there's problems. It's kind of like being the university president. He's done a tremendous job, and one of the things he's done is, if you cannot come to the games, it's fascinating, you can watch ESPN, plus, it's unbelievable, yeah, oh, yeah. He kind of founded that program. He got, he's got a little crew. We're now about a year old, yeah, so every

**Gavin Kelly**

game, every sport, yeah.

**Teddy Allen**

Again, the production crew is less than a year old. And if you compare it to other broadcasts, I think you'd be really pleased with what he's been able to put together, and all the guys work hard, but it's a, it's a wonderful thing. We do it in house. It's like, it's, yeah, it's tough, yeah. And they're improving every every game learning. But it's, it's a, they are going 90 to nothing. It's a great crew. They just want to get better and give you the opportunity to feel like you're at the game when can't come

**Cami Geisman**

it's it's been a very blessed year here at Louisiana Tech. I'm looking forward to 2026 even though, man, I can't lose 2026 you know, say the years go faster the older you get. And by God, that's true. But it's gonna be another great year. More magazines, more funny videos, more athletics. We'll have Giving Day March 26 we had a great Giving Day last year. I think there's a lot of building on campus, a lot of recruiting. It's gonna be another great year that we'll do this again next year.

**Gavin Kelly**

Yeah, not to be like these year end episodes like are a little bit. Redundant in the way, because every year we're just like, man, we raised all this money. We're building all these buildings, we got all these students, and it's just every year we get to say the same things. But it's a good problem to have.

**Teddy Allen**

Yep, and we've been really lucky in University Communications, basically injury free. Unlike the football team lost its defensive player of the year or having this Tom. Tom had some turf, so he battled through it. Well, he didn't. We didn't release that to the media. He didn't want it. He was a trooper. He didn't. He put the right side of offensive line battled.

**Cami Geisman**

Gavin had about a week of sinus issues, if you remember, I

**Teddy Allen**

remember that now that, but other people pull the slack, and we battle. We muddled through, so hopefully we can have another injury free.

**Gavin Kelly**

Yeah, here's the good health in the new year. And once again, if you're listening from University Communications, from Louisiana, Tech University, Merry Christmas. Happy New Year and Go Dogs and Go Dogs.

**Gavin Kelly**

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