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University of Louisiana,  
New-Orleans Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 1856.

Rev. John McLean D.D.  
Pres. College of New Jersey, Princeton N. J.

Rev. & dear sire,

Your successful labors in behalf of learning & religion, & in building up their essential institutions, attract the attention of your less experienced countrymen & cause them to apply to you for counsel when they would follow where you have so honorably & usefully led.

Permit me on behalf of this institution & the cause of liberal learning in our land, to ask of you some needed information. In order to the clearer presentation of our condition, I will premise that the University of Louisiana is a state enterprise, begun some ten years ago; that by means of direct appropriations of money by the Legislature it already has ample buildings, centrally located, in this city; that its Law & Medical schools have existed several years & are doing well; that its Collegiate Department has not as yet, in any regular, <sup>or</sup> proper manner, been organized; & cannot in strictness, be said to have an existence; that there is a High or Grammar school kept up in one of its buildings & called the "Academical Department" in which a good many of the higher studies are pursued, including Mathematics, Modern & Ancient Languages, even the Hebrew, for which last a special provision has been made by a wealthy

individual State of this city; that this school is however, in fact, pecuniarily & almost governmentally a private concern; the principal receiving & disbursing the income from fees & enjoying no material aid from the administrators beyond the use of the University buildings; that the whole institution is under the control of a Board of Administrators nominated by the Governor to the Senate, but authorized to fill vacancies in their own body during recesses of the Legislature. This Board (of which the writer is a member) is sincerely desirous, with as little delay as possible, fully to organize the several departments & schools of the University & to make it, so far as they can, what its name imports & its charter requires it to be. To this end, the plan for a complete construction of the Collegiate department becomes a matter of the first consequence. This plan, together with a project for requisite endowments, &c, have been required of me as a committee; & I am expected if practicable to report thereon to the administrators in Sept. prox. In thus appealing to you, Rev. Sir, I have two principal objects in view, though beyond them, I would sincerely thank you for any other & further observations & directions you may please to give upon the education best suited to the wants of our age & country.

Firstly I would ask your counsels & plans for the <sup>forming</sup> foundation of a suitable Faculty of Arts, or ~~as denominated in this charter~~ of "The Collegiate Department." Secondly as to the best & most available & certain <sup>minimum</sup> mode or modes of endowment.

As this University has not received anything from Congress,

(which has been exceedingly liberal to other institutions in the West & South West.) I am led to hope we may obtain a grant of land from that source.

The Legislature of Louisiana has already been liberal; but with a really good plan of endowment presented to it, I should not despair of obtaining perhaps \$100,000 additional, or the annual interest on it, which would be to us nearly the same. Our population both city & state, as you are aware, is much mixed, even our educated minds representing the training afforded by many of the Continental, the British & the widely different institutions of our own country. The desire for education is, however, I am happy to say, very general, & I entertain a cheerful hope that when a really judicious call is made upon our citizens for donations to the University or for founding professorships & scholarships, it will meet with extensive favor.

I am, Rev & dear sir, with great respect & esteem,  
Your Obedt. Servt.

J. Copes.

Comm. on Coll. Dep. W. B. Adams, La. Univ.