“Sixteen scattered collections were placed within the Louisiana Museum of Natural History (as the Louisiana State Museum of Natural History, enacted through legislative action). The collections are not currently housed within a single building they do not have the same reporting lines or even report to the same senior administrators.”

“From the standpoint of a university/state museum, the collections at LSU are superb.”

“The collections are so extensive that they contain numerous examples of unique specimens/objects that would be iconic exhibit items that would excite the public to visit... spectacular minerals, diverse anthropological items from many cultures, textile materials, and a variety of specimens that are currently not exhibited but that would be the envy of many major museums.”

“The LMNH collections also have large numbers of original objects or "type" specimens... The numerous type specimens in the micropaleontology collection of the Department of Geology and Geophysics are excellent examples.”

“At LSU, the frozen tissue collection provides another excellent example.... The tissue collection is impacting research throughout the world and is clearly one of the most important such collections on the planet.”

“Many, if not most, specimens and objects are irreplaceable and their value would have to be measured in the tens of millions of dollars, at least, if they were to be placed on the market. Their value to Louisiana is incalculable.”

“The present facilities that house the collections range from excellent (the herbarium) through very poor, to dismal.Present collection storage facilities total less than 36,000 square feet of mostly inadequate and unsafe spaces.”

“The bird collection, the nation’s 4th largest, is arguably the most important collection in the museum. The problems of housing a significant portion of a major museum’s collections in an old, dilapidated building are clearly illustrated by the state of the bird collection.... The aged building was never designed for such specialized care of global treasures.”

“At LSU, what are the exhibits? Why would the public seek them out? For example, the museum's exhibits at MNS (Museum of Natural Science):
   1) aged traditional displays of natural history specimens based on local environments -typical of an era long past; and
   2) a new interpretive exhibit centering on LSU-based Antarctic research...”

“As the largest natural history museum in the south-central United States, it is unfortunate... that the LSU exhibits suffer greatly from poor locations on campus that are not only difficult to reach and find, but exhibits at the LMNH clearly fall far short of the present-day mark in the world of natural history museums.”

“SNOMNH’s* traveling exhibits and educational kits reached out to our public ...We think that this strategy played a major role in our ability to plan and fund our new facility....Like the LMNS, we had limited exhibit space of very poor quality. Outreach appealed to funding sources..."
“We find the strong support from the Build-a-Museum group** of community supporters to be a remarkably powerful stimulus to encourage all parties to participate in good faith dialogue... Such good will is impossible to buy and difficult to attract under the best of circumstances.”

“A fully functioning university museum can be a tremendous asset to a university, as has been shown at such institutions as Harvard, Yale, Berkeley, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Texas, the University of Florida, the University of Minnesota, and many others. At each of these campuses, museums are seen as a contributor to education, research, public education, service, outreach, and even fund raising.”

“We strongly suggest that LSU, LMNH, and government and public stakeholders jointly form a task force to begin strategic planning. It is vital that the state and private sector, as well as university representatives and museum professional staff and curators, be represented.”

* Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.
** Build-A-Museum is now incorporated as the Friends of the Louisiana Museum of Natural History, an IRS 501(C) (3) tax-exempt foundation.