



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Road Map To Health

JULY 2025 • VOLUME 12

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR NUTRITION, HEALTH,
WELLNESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

HBCU DAY AT THE CAPITOL



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Let's Get Social



Instagram



SUCENTEROFEXCELLENCE

Baton Rouge, LA - The Center of Excellence proudly participated in HBCU Day at the Capitol 2025, presented by the Louisiana Board of Regents. On Monday, April 28, at the Capitol Park Museum, the event celebrated the achievements and impact of Louisiana's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. During the evening reception, the Center of Excellence team connected with students, alumni, legislators, and community leaders, highlighting our programs and contributions to advancing innovation and leadership at HBCUs.

TOWER TO TABLE



Baton Rouge, LA - The 1890 Center of Excellence harvested lettuce from the Southern University Child Development Laboratory, yielding approximately 4 pounds. The lettuce was used for a nutrition education lesson focused on hydroponic gardening, the benefits of lettuce, and a food demonstration led by Program Manager Ms. Brittany Howard and Student Scholar Ms. Hannah Brister. Our Little Jags received an educational packet covering lettuce, the letter "L", hydroponic gardening, and a lettuce wrap recipe. They also had the opportunity to assemble and sample the lettuce wraps during the session.

The remaining lettuce will be used in salads or meals for students and staff. Special thanks to the Child Development Lab for their collaboration and for donating additional food items for the snack-time demonstration. This effort would not have been possible without the leadership of Mr. Cornelius Jackson, along with the support of Professor Stephanie Elwood, Ms. Yasmyne Wells, and assistance from COE students Ms. Chasity Joseph, Mr. De'Aree Harris, Mr. De'Kevion Ford, Mr. Nicholas Vallair, and CAHES Student Support Coordinator Ms. Keandrys Dalton.

Photo Credit: Mr. Cornelius Jackson and Ms. Kandace Moss

PLATES, PLAY, AND PURPOSE: INSPIRING HEALTHY HABITS

Baton Rouge, LA - The 1890 Center of Excellence had a great time teaching students at Bernard Terrace Elementary about MyPlate! Engaging with young minds about balanced nutrition and healthy eating habits is always rewarding. We loved seeing their enthusiasm as they learned how to build a healthy plate. Each student received an infused water bottle and frisbees to encourage at least 60 minutes of active play every day.



Baton Rouge, LA - Exxon Mobil YMCA campers '*Laissez les bon temps rouler*' and got creative with making their own Mardi Gras-inspired King Cakes. To promote healthier choices, the traditional recipe was modified by incorporating yogurt-based icing, natural sweeteners, and fresh strawberries. They had fun decorating their king cakes into colorful shapes while learning about MYPLATE through a fun crossword puzzle!



EARTH DAY

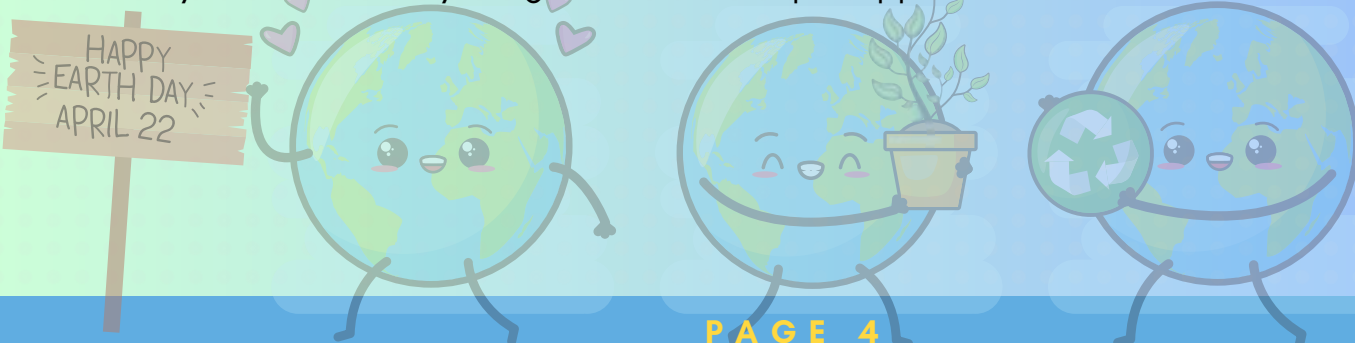
Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22nd to raise awareness and inspire action for environmental protection, uniting individuals, communities, schools, organizations, and governments worldwide in support of sustainability. This day serves as a reminder that we all share one planet, and small actions—like reducing waste, conserving water, or supporting clean energy—can lead to significant and meaningful change when we act collectively.



Baton Rouge, LA – The Exxon Mobil YMCA campers dove into hands-on eco adventures as they celebrated Earth Day in unforgettable ways with Mr. De’Aree Harris.

1. Soil Sampling & Analysis – Campers explored the underground ecosystem, uncovering microbes and living organisms while learning about soil quality.
2. Plant Part Identification– They got up close with nature, identifying leaves, stems, roots, and understanding their roles.
3. Introduction to Edible Forage– Our young explorers learned about safe, edible plants and how to recognize them in the wild.
4. Interactive Nature Walk – Guided by fun facts and curiosity, campers enjoyed a nature walk that brought science and storytelling together.

It was a day full of discovery, laughter, and a deeper appreciation for Earth.



B iling Up Partnerships: A Taste of Community Collaboration



CRAWFISH KING
COOK-OFF
2025 JUDGES



2025
CRAWFISH KING
COOK-OFF



37 TEAMS COMPETING FOR THE
TITLE OF CRAWFISH KING



BON APPÉTIT
ALL YOU CAN EAT



JUDGING AREA



VENDORS
GALORE

Baton Rouge, LA – The Center of Excellence staff had an amazing opportunity to serve as judges at the 2025 Crawfish King Cook-Off on Friday, May 2nd! It was a flavorful day filled with fun, friendly competition, and community spirit—all for a great cause.

All proceeds from the event benefit Junior Achievement and the Big Buddy Program, two incredible organizations making a lasting impact on local youth.

We're proud to support and cultivate strong relationships with our community partners!



WOMEN'S HEALTH



Baton Rouge, LA – The Center of Excellence proudly participated in the 2025 Women's Health Week: "Happenings, Hurdles, and Hope" by joining the Self-Care & Wellness Day event held on Monday, May 12th on behalf of the Louisiana Center for Health Equity. The evening aimed to promote wellness, inspiration, and community connection.

The event featured a variety of empowering speakers and wellness activities. Project Manager, Ms. Brittany Howard, delivered an engaging presentation titled *"Wellness with Reach: Strategies for a Healthier You,"* providing practical guidance on sustainable health habits.

In addition to the presentation, COE Student Scholar Ms. Destinae Davis offered attendees healthy refreshments, including blueberry chia pudding and berry lemon basil infused water—a crowd favorite! The COE also contributed to the evening's spirit of wellness by raffling off herb plants (sage, rosemary, and oregano) to encourage participants to incorporate fresh, healing ingredients into their daily lives.

The COE was honored to have taken part in this inspiring initiative and looks forward to continuing its mission of advancing health, wellness, and equity across Louisiana communities.

Lunch & Learn



Baton Rouge, LA –The Center of Excellence recently hosted a lively Lunch and Learn for Southern University faculty and staff—an engaging opportunity to explore new skills while enjoying great food and fellowship.

The featured topic was repurposing foods, with a hands-on activity that allowed each participant to build their own Greek salad and craft a personalized salad dressing. To top it off, staff joined in on some fun line dancing to burn a few calories and keep the energy high!

The event was a hit, with attendees raving about the interactive format—especially their custom-made dressings. It was a delicious and dynamic way to promote healthy habits and team connection.



COE Summer Camp Highlights



Pinkie Thrift Student Lounge Renovation



Baton Rouge, LA - We're making great progress in the Pinkie E. Thrift Hall Student Lounge! The television and soundbar have been set up, incorporating emerging technologies to enhance the student experience. These features promote social interaction, relaxation, and community engagement. The TV will also be used to display digital flyers for upcoming events hosted by the Center of Excellence and College of Agricultural, Human, and Environmental Sciences, keeping students informed and connected. The upgraded audio-visual setup makes the lounge more inviting and versatile for both recreational and educational use.

We're excited to see the completion of this project—stay tuned for more updates!





TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY



From Plate to Heart: A Day of Nutrition and Connection



Tuskegee, Alabama – The Tuskegee University team had an exciting and impactful day in Macon County during their recent community nutrition session. Dozens of residents joined them for an engaging, hands-on event focused on heart health and raising awareness about type 2 diabetes.

During the nutrition education portion, participants explored practical strategies to support a healthier lifestyle. One of the highlights of the day was the interactive plate-building activity, in which attendees were paired into teams to create two sample plates: a balanced plate for everyday individuals and a diabetes-friendly plate designed to support blood sugar management.

After the session, everyone enjoyed a flavorful, nutritious meal that included: veggie pizza, zucchini fries, baked chicken, brown rice, mixed green salad, bean salad, and fresh fruit assortment.

The atmosphere was filled with energy, learning, and community spirit.



ConGRADulations!



Cornelius

Baton Rouge, LA - We are proud to celebrate one of our very own—Mr. Cornelius Jackson—for his outstanding achievement in earning a Master of Urban Forestry degree! His commitment to professional growth and continuous learning is a shining example of the excellence we strive for every day.

Cornelius's accomplishment reflects the spirit of dedication, innovation, and teamwork that defines our staff. Whether through exceptional service, creative contributions, or supporting one another, you help shape a stronger, more connected community.

Let's take a moment to celebrate this milestone and the incredible efforts each of you put in every day. Here's to continued growth, shared success, and a bright future ahead!

VIRTUAL SEMINAR SERIES



TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025 | 11 AM - 12 PM (NOON) CST

GUEST SPEAKER:
Bianca Datta, Ph.D.
 Researcher, Scientist, Materials Explorer

Dr. Bianca Datta works to grow the size, diversity, and interconnectedness of the alternative protein research community. She was previously a food scientist at Black Sheep Foods, specializing in the use of biopolymers to improve plant-based meat texture and functionality. Her formal academic training is in material science and engineering. She received her bachelor's from the University of Pennsylvania and her master's and Ph.D. from the MIT Media Lab, where she studied material design and fabrication of bio-inspired structural color. Bianca is passionate about community-building, science communication, and mentorship, and enjoys finding the connections and synergies between disparate disciplines, worlds of thought, and stakeholder communities. She also brings a strong interest in sustainability, conservation, and circular material systems to our work at GFI. She is based in San Francisco, CA and her outside-of-work loves include:

Register for this seminar at:
<https://bit.ly/4jiv620>



Join us for a virtual webinar!
A Call to Action to Address Inequities in
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 | 12 PM (NOON) - 1 PM (CST)

GUEST SPEAKER:
DR. CHASTITY BRADFORD
 Department Head / Associate Professor, School of Biology
 Tusculum University

Dr. Chastity Bradford is the Department Head and Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Tusculum University (2020 present). She has 24 years of direct mentoring experience for 4-12 students and 4-10 faculty undergraduate, master's, and graduate student researchers. Her career is focused on cardiovascular research, specifically on the use of omics and targeted approaches to improve cardiac health outcomes. She holds a PhD in Cellular and Molecular Physiology from University of Alabama at Birmingham and a MS in Biology from Spelman College. She completed a Howard Hughes Faculty Leadership Fellowship in Physiology and Functional Genomics at the University of Florida College of Medicine. This was part of the second class of the University of Texas at Austin's HHMI graduate school and project lead for an NSF funded grant focused on 3D-printed heart models. Dr. Bradford worked as a visiting Professor at the Temple University Cardiovascular Research Center. She completed a Howard Hughes Faculty Fellowship at the University of Florida in Physiology and Functional Genomics and a visiting professorship at Temple University. She is currently the Project Director for a USDA-NIFA funded research and extension program for undergraduate (2021) project designed to help students to use Omics and Information Systems to solve current biological problems. Co-PI for a National Health Service Research Institute funded project to establish a Center in Biomedical Research, partly PI for a USDA funded Inclusive Bioeconomy Initiative that focuses a learning community to increase the institutions' capacity for inclusion of all students in the sciences. Her laboratory continues to elucidate the role of the heart in human health and disease and conduct studies in cardiovascular remodeling. The study the impact of nutritional intervention on models of metabolic syndrome and angiotensin II hypertension to determine the effect of nutrition on cardiac action potential, cardiac remodeling, and vascular function. With a greater emphasis on the role of the gut in metabolism and heart failure, we are using artificial intelligence and machine learning to provide data-driven insights to issues in our community population prediction models to advance cardiovascular health outcomes.

Dr. Bradford has made numerous efforts to engage and mentor the STEM workforce. She has co-ordinated several educational research experiences that support the exposure of undergraduate to authentic research in the classroom. She is passionate about teaching physiology and mentorship. She has received the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Member of the Month and the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Teaching Award. She was recently featured in the University of North Carolina, Charlotte for her work. When she was with the support of efforts to advance research initiatives in her department, she was recently named the Howard Hughes award and was the 2021 winner of the Year Award. She received an American Heart Association study scholar grant and received the Best of Best award. She has received her Ph.D. from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and was the 2021 winner of the Year Award. She received an American Heart Association study scholar grant and received the Best of Best award.

REGISTER AT: https://www.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Z00UaWxRPMKAgv1Cg

UPCOMING EVENTS

The 1890 Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life

PRESENTS



EXCELLENCE EXCHANGE
Lunch & Learn

Join us for a delicious lunch and learn with our guest speaker, Dr. Chastity Bradford. This event is free and open to all. Registration is required. Register now to secure your spot.

FINNE E. THURFT HALL
CAPT. LAUREN
ROOM #301
WEDNESDAY, JULY 23RD
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

REGISTER NOW
<https://bit.ly/4jiv620>

SU TOGETHER:
MOVE MORE, EAT BETTER

Excellence in Motion!

Join us for a summer walk!
Tuesdays & Thursdays
JUNE 10 - JULY 24
 (Excluding July 1st and 21st)
5:00 PM - 6:15 PM
Fisher Hall

If you would like to participate in these group walks, please RSVP using the QR code or register at: <https://forms.office.com/r/1ag3Y3By58m>

For any additional questions email:
bjones@tusc.edu
kgilman@tusc.edu
 or www.tusc.edu/1890center

The 1890 Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life

PRESENTS



EXCELLENCE EXCHANGE
Lunch & Learn

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Road Map to Health - A Healthy Brew

LOGIC GRID PUZZLE

Four friends set out on a journey to improve their health, each choosing a unique path. One focused on building strength, carefully selecting foods to fuel intense workouts. Another prioritized mental clarity, finding balance through mindful movement and nourishing meals. The third was dedicated to heart health, incorporating a diet rich in essential nutrients to support an active lifestyle. The last embraced the importance of gut health, ensuring every meal contributed to overall well-being. Though their goals differed, they supported each other, proving that wellness is a journey best taken together.

The grid will have four variables (categories), and the goal is to match each correctly based on logical clues:

- 1. Participants – Alex, Jordan, Morgan, Taylor
- 2. Health Focus Area – Heart Health, Mental Well-Being, Weight Management, Digestive Health
- 3. Primary Food Choice – Oats, Salmon, Yogurt, Spinach
- 4. Favorite Physical Activity – Yoga, Running, Weightlifting, Swimming

Person	Health Focus	Food Choice	Activity
Alex			
Jordan			
Morgan			
Taylor			

Clues

- 1. The person who focuses on Heart Health prefers Salmon but does not like Running.
- 2. Morgan enjoys Swimming and is not focused on Mental Well-Being.
- 3. Taylor eats Yogurt and is interested in Digestive Health.
- 4. Jordan does Yoga but does not focus on Weight Management.
- 5. The person interested in Mental Well-Being consumes Spinach.
- 6. Alex does Weightlifting and is not focused on Heart Health.

Answers: Taylor eats Yogurt and focuses on Digestive Health (Clue 3). Jordan does Yoga but not Weight Management (Clue 4). Since Jordan is not focused on Weight Management, they must be the one focusing on Mental Well-Being. Morgan enjoys Swimming and is not focused on Mental Well-Being (Clue 2). That leaves Heart Health for Morgan. The Heart Health person eats Salmon (Clue 1), so Morgan must eat Salmon. Alex does Weightlifting and is not focused on Heart Health (Clue 6). That leaves Weight Management for Alex. Since Alex is focused on Weight Management, they must eat Oats (the remaining food option). That leaves Taylor with Running as the only unassigned physical activity.



BLUEBERRY CHIA PUDDING

TOTAL TIME: 35 MINUTES

YIELD: 2

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk
- ½ cup frozen or fresh blueberries, plus more for topping
- 2 teaspoons of maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoon chia seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

- Add milk, blueberries, maple syrup, and vanilla to a blender and blend until smooth and combined.
- Add blueberry milk to a Mason jar and stir in chia seeds. Let sit for 5 minutes then stir the mixture again to get out any clumps that may have formed. Place mixture in the fridge to set, at least 30 minutes but up to 12 hours.
- When ready to enjoy, top with fresh blueberries and granola.

Nutrition

Serving: 1/2 recipe | Calories: 135kcal | Carbohydrates: 13g | Protein: 4g | Fat: 8g |
Saturated Fat: 1g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 5g | Monounsaturated Fat: 2g | Sodium: 99mg
| Potassium: 246mg | Fiber: 5g | Sugar: 6g

Source: <https://www.eatingbirdfood.com/blueberry-chia-pudding/#wprm-recipe-container-145618>