

# *The Ag Center's* **CHANCELLOR'S** *Mc***REPORT**

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For Your Years of Service to the Southern University Ag Center  
and the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences



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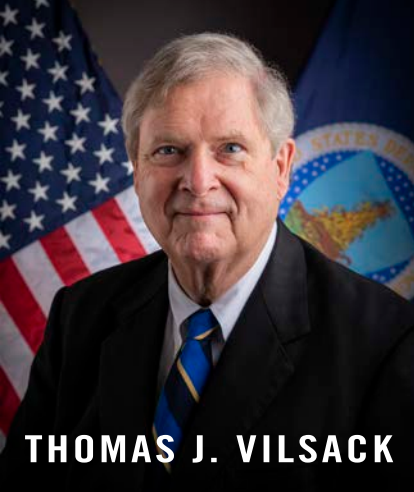


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*The Southern University  
Agricultural Research and  
Extension Center and the College  
of Agricultural, Family and  
Consumer Sciences recognizes the  
members of our faculty and staff  
who are celebrating their 10 and 20  
year anniversaries of employment.  
Your hard work and dedication is  
greatly appreciated!*



# U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Visits SU & SU Ag Center



Administrator Isabella Guzman.

Vilsack concluded his tour by speaking with farmers from around the state at the Southern University Ag Center's Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena Multi-purpose Building.

Southern University was the second stop on Secretary Vilsack's tour.



United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack visited the Southern University Baton Rouge and Southern University Ag Center campuses on February 14, 2023, as part of his HBCU tour.

During the tour, Secretary Vilsack met with Southern University Ag Center and College of Ag Chancellor-Dean Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Southern University President-Chancellor Dennis J. Shields, Southern University Board of Supervisors Chair Myron K. Lawson, and other high-ranking officials. He also spoke with Southern's 1890 Student Scholars.

Vilsack addressed a group of Southern University officials, Congressman Troy Carter, local and state elected officials, and USDA Senior Advisor for Racial Equity, Dr. Dwayne Goldmon during a briefing presentation that was moderated by Southern University Ag majors Kennedy Orr and Ian Washington.

Following the presentation, Vilsack meet with small business owners and participated in a press conference with Congressman Troy Carter, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, and SBA



# SU Ag Center's Research Assistant Felton DeRouen II Receives the SU System Above and Beyond Award

Felton DeRouen II, Research Assistant at the SU Ag Center, received the Southern University System's Above and Beyond Award during the Southern University System Board of Supervisors meeting on February 10, 2023.

The "Above and Beyond Award" was established to help inspire and motivate Southern employees to reach their maximum performance. It honors outstanding achievements in the workplace, exceptional contributions toward efficiency and effectiveness of operations, special efforts in promoting workforce excellence, or outstanding service to the University community and constituents. This month marks the 6th year of the award. One award will be presented at the SU Board of Supervisors meetings each month. Recipients of the award are nominated by their peers and the top three nominations are then selected by the Board of Supervisors chair and vice chairs.



**FELTON DEROUEN II**

DeRouen received his Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from Southern University. His love for animals began as a child when he participated in SU Livestock Shows.

He uses his knowledge to inform and encourage farmers on the use of animals on their farms while using sustainable practices working with poultry, rabbits, goats, lambs, cattle, and swine. As Manager of the on-campus livestock, he is responsible for communicating with faculty researchers on animal wellness and research progress as well as encouraging student interactions through hands-on-learning activities. DeRouen also assists with the collection and testing of meat samples, performs wellness checks on animals, and conducts trainings on basic animal husbandry. He also serves as a Program Trainer for our Sustainable Urban



Agriculture & Master Small Ruminant Certification Programs.

DeRouen is currently working with at least three active grants/projects totaling more than \$2,000,000. He is a co-author on at least two livestock publications and is the recipient of the National Pork Board Certification, Louisiana Department of Ag and Forestry Pesticide Applicator Certification, Wild Animal Trapper Certification, and a recipient of a Research Assistant Award at the Joint SU/LSU Ag Centers Annual Conference on December 12, 2022.

# Dr. Marlin Ford Named as Assistant Director for Plant Research at the SU Ag Center

Dr. Marlin Ford has been appointed as the Assistant Director for Plant Research/ Research Assistant Professor and Urban Agricultural Specialist at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. The appointment was made during the Southern University System's Board of Supervisors meeting on February 10, 2023.

As Assistant Director of Plant Research/ Research Assistant Professor and Urban Agricultural Specialist, Dr. Ford will aid the Vice Chancellor of Research in managing physical resources associated with all plant research locations, along with assisting extension agents and specialists with the Agricultural Urban Gardening program. His expected start date is March 1, 2023.

Dr. Ford received his Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree in General Studies and Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University in Fall of 1999, as well as a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership and Administration/Supervision from Southern University in the Fall of 2001. Just two years later, Ford received his Master of Science degree in Urban Forestry from Southern University. He accompanies these degrees with a Master of Public Administration degree from Grambling State University in the Fall of 2006. Ford went on to receive his Doctorate of Philosophy in Urban Forestry and Natural Resources from Southern University in the Spring of 2011.

Coexistent with his degrees, Dr. Ford has obtained a plethora of certifications and licenses, including his Louisiana Department of Ag & Forestry Private Pesticide Applicator License, his 2008 Introduction to ArcGIS I & II Certification, and his 2006 AWWA Water and Wastewater Certification.



*Dr. Marlin Ford*



The Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences held the 28th annual Collegiate Black History Quiz Bowl on February 23, 2023 in the 3rd floor auditorium of T.T. Allain Hall.

Southern University students representing clubs, organizations, groups, and majors from throughout the campus competed to show their knowledge of current events, politics, history, sports, and entertainment. Each team consisted of four members with an optional alternate.

Team Talented Tenth consisting of James Nettles, Jimilah Stith, Kendall Banks, and Shannon Wilmer won 1st place; Team Jaguar Blue A consisting of Carrington Curry, Karriem Upshaw, Kelvin Powell, and Zsada Antoine placed 2nd and Team Justice B consisting of Ashonti Scott, Keith Jackson, Knykolas Ross, and Sterling Fluery placed 3rd.

Dr. Owusu Bandele, SU Ag Center Professor Emeritus, has been organizing the annual

Black History Quiz Bowl and serving as its moderator for the past 28 years.

“I started with the college bowls about 28 years ago but I noticed in time that there was a need to start earlier with the youngsters and they can in with such ethnicism and a real strong quest for learning,” said Dr. Bandele. “The lower grades have been very competitive.”

Bandele has been holding middle and high school black history quiz bowls for the past 5 years. This year he organized the 1st Annual Elementary School Black History Quiz Bowl on February 14.

“It’s so important to me to start early so they have a deep history going forward,” added Bandele.

Seven teams of eager elementary school students from Indira Mura Institute (IMI), Mayfair, Palmetto, Forest Heights, Audubon, SU Lab, and Park Ridge Elementary School competed.



Forest Heights' Deacons for Defense team consisting of Dillon Thomas, Blake Hilton, Jada Robinson, Octavia Graham, and Jeremiah Peeler took home 1st place; followed by Mayfair's Freedom Fighters Team consisting of Braylen August, Harlem Lindsey, Aryn Avalos Ruiz, Liam Cassidy, and Likitha Bommagani placed 2nd and Palmetto's The Historians Team consisting of Kane Coburn, Liam Thornton, Wyatt Haynes, Emma Moore, and Kayden Tan placed 3rd.

The high school black history quiz bowl was held on Feb. 16 with teams from Indira Mura Institute, Scotlandville, Baton Rouge High, Baker, St. Amant, and Southern Lab. Scotlandville Magnet's Freedom Riders team consisting of Tameiya Rivers, Daryl Powell, Kalaja Johnson, David Turner and Malaysia Young took home 1st place; Baton Rouge Magnet's Justice Warriors team consisting of Khalila Bandele, Matthew Evans, Malina Ouyang, Zoria Brown, and Kyra Munson placed 2nd; and Indira Mura Institute's I'M Inspiration team consisting of Makayla Bey, Jamaria Fisher, Nakija Robins, Damon Lodge, Jr. and Larry Drake placed 3rd.

The middle school black history quiz bowl was held on Feb. 17 with teams from IMI, Mayfair,



Westdale, and Plaisance Middle Schools. IMI Inventors earned first place consisting of Alion Wilkins, Kalonji Wilkins, Tyeler Anderson, Aris Lodge, Chance Freeman, Westdale's 106 team consisting of Morris Walker, Alexander Owens, Zyon Joseph, Kale Cowen, and Oliver Pearce placed 2nd, and Plaisance's Deacons for Defense team consisting of Ava Pitre, Zaniyah Primeaux, Haize Lee, Hayden Fontenot, and Jayden Jack placed 3rd.

The 1st and 2nd place winners in each quiz bowl were awarded a medal, a calendar, and a book by or about some aspect of the Black experience. The 3rd place winners received a medal and a book. Every participant also received a book at the end of the event.



# AGRIBUSINESS MAJOR

## Antoine Richardson Selected to Represent SU at the Super Bowl

Antoine Richardson, a sophomore agricultural business major from Wynne, Arkansas, was selected to represent Southern University at the 3rd annual EA SPORTS™ Madden NFL 23 x HBCU Tournament with an exclusive experience during the Super Bowl LVII week of February 6 – February 13.

The all-expense paid ‘experience-ship’ was designed to provide students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities a chance to compete and learn the business of sports through shadowing opportunities and networking events.

For several weeks before the tournament, Richardson attended weekly video calls to prepare himself for his week with the league including tips for creating LinkedIn profiles, resume building, networking strategies, and email etiquette. The NFL hosted Richardson and 14 other HBCU students to learn about the business side of football through various events, activations, and career development sessions with NFL partners including Microsoft and Electronic Arts. This was an opportunity to learn valuable career advice from NFL executives and key stakeholders and potentially create long-term connections that can be beneficial for life after college.

Richardson said the highlight of his trip was participating in the Madden NFL 23 x HBCU tournament, which premiered on February 11 on the NFL YouTube channel, where finalists competed for the title and a piece of the \$70,000 prize pool in cash and prizes.. To conclude the week, Richardson attended the Super Bowl LVII, on February 12, 2023, at State Farm Stadium.

## Research on Industrial Hemp is Being Conducted to Assist Farmers

The impact of climate change is real. Those affected include farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in rural communities. Climate change is characterized by factors such as persistent droughts, declining freshwater resources, and severe floods, leading to reduced crop production. Thus, it is more critical, now more than ever, to forge new developmental strategies to enhance the cultivation of sustainable climate-smart commodities. This will lead to an improved carbon sink, human health, and the endurance of American agriculture.

Researchers from the Southern University Ag Center, Florida A&M University (the lead institution), and Alabama A&M University (all 1890 land-grant and minority-serving institutions) and the University of Florida, an 1862 land-grant institution, along with cooperation from the National Hemp Growers Cooperative, LLC (NHGC), are addressing the critical significance of these issues.

The research team submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and has received an award totaling \$4,990,000. From the federal grant, the Ag Center will receive a total of \$640,402 for the implementation of a five-year project (2023-2028) titled, “A Comprehensive Evaluation of the Impact of Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) and Soil Microalgae Consortium (*Chlorella* spp. and *Scenedesmus* spp.) as High-Efficiency Carbon Sequestration Model Plants: Implications for Climate Change and Soil Improvement.”

The project is a collaborative effort developed to create a unique synergy for engaging small and/or underserved farmers in agricultural production. James Obuya, Ph.D., a Research Assistant Professor at the Southern University Ag Center, will lead the implementation of this multi-institutional project in Louisiana. The project will focus on the improvement of carbon sink by encouraging small and/or underserved farmers in the southeastern United States, specifically in Louisiana, Florida, and Alabama, to participate in planting industrial hemp (*Cannabis sativa*), a climate-smart commodity crop with high carbon sequestration efficiency.

*The project will focus on four major objectives:*

**1. Evaluate the carbon sequestration ability of industrial hemp, the ability of soil microalgae to improve soil health, and soil dynamics properties in different agroclimatic zones in the southeastern United States (Louisiana, Florida, and Alabama).**

**2. Recruit, enroll, and engage small and/or underserved farmers and other stakeholders to implement and evaluate a comprehensive set of regenerative practices that include cultivating industrial hemp for carbon sequestration, the use of rotational cover crop(s) to improve soil carbon and health, while reducing soil erosion and pest/disease buildup over time in the southeastern United States.**

**3. Couple the development of best agronomic practices with new, appropriately targeted markets for industrial hemp in the southeastern United States to foster the adoption of industrial hemp as an economically viable, climate-smart cropping option for small and/or underserved farmers.**

**4. Develop a program to monitor, report, and verify activities related to carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction in participating farms, with the intent of potentially creating a carbon credit system for the benefit of small and/or underserved farmers.**

Direct training and education will be provided to small and/or underserved farmers for the economic and environmental benefits of hemp production. Field days will be conducted at all participating institutions to familiarize farmers with all activities involved in hemp production, including marketing.

For additional information on the SU Ag Center’s industrial hemp program, contact Dr. James Obuya at [james\\_obuya@suagcenter.com](mailto:james_obuya@suagcenter.com).

# HIGHLIGHTS FACULTY & STAFF



## Dr. Krystle Allen to Join National Program Aimed at Helping Land-Grant System Leaders Ascend to Leadership Roles



**DR. KRYSTLE J. ALLEN**

Dr. Krystle Allen, Program Leader for Family and Consumer Sciences and Assistant Specialist for Community and Economic Development at the SU Ag Center, was selected as a participant in the 19th class of the LEAD21 program, a leadership program aimed at developing leaders in land-grant institutions and their strategic partners who link research, academics, and extension for leadership roles at colleges and universities across the nation.

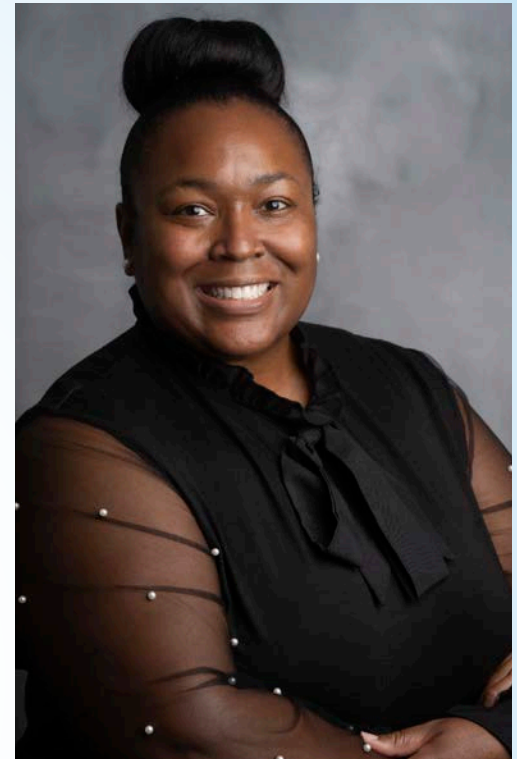
“Being selected for the LEAD21- Class 19 will help me sharpen the skills I already possess, while also highlighting and growing those I have yet to attain,” said Dr. Allen. “As a leader, I am often tasked with providing guidance, inspiration, motivation, and direction to my unit; thus, sharpening my leadership skills will allow me to better communicate my vision to my team, while also ensuring I am continuing to lift them up as I climb.”

LEAD21 provides an immersive professional development program for academic leaders from the land-grant system. Working in regular small group meetings combined with three week-long immersive sessions, the participants will learn effective leadership skills for increasingly complex higher education environments as well as strategies for influencing institutional transformation in their current and future leadership positions. “Additionally, the LEAD 21 program will serve as an opportunity for me to utilize the “train the trainer” model; as I will bring the knowledge, skills, and abilities I acquire from this experience, back into my unit; empowering everyone to succeed, communicate better, and learn new skills,” added Dr. Allen.

The LEAD21 program is targeted at faculty specialists, program and team leaders, research station and center directors, district and regional directors, department heads and chairs, and others in land-grant universities’ colleges of agricultural, environmental, and human sciences and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Learn more about the LEAD21 program at [www.lead-21.org](http://www.lead-21.org).

## Dr. Kenyetta Nelson-Smith Has Been Accepted into the Inaugural Teaching and Equity Society



**DR. KENYETTA NELSON-SMITH**

Dr. Kenyetta Nelson-Smith, the Interim Chair of The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and Executive Director of Southern University’s Child Development Laboratory, has been accepted into the inaugural cohort of fellows for Teaching in an Inequitable Society: A Call to Action Fellowship.

With a mission to assist in piloting an engaging, creative, invigorated, and action-oriented community of practice, the Teaching in an Inequitable Society encourages both a willingness to be self-reflective and a commitment to social justice, traits that Dr. Nelson-Smith’s work speaks for alone.

“Being accepted into the inaugural cohort of fellows for Teaching in an Inequitable Society: A Call to Action Fellowship is a professional opportunity that will afford me the chance to work with early childhood leaders at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to enhance my skills to equip future educators with a better ability to provide equity, social justice, and early care and education as they grow to advocate and educate our young minds,” expressed Dr. Nelson-Smith.

She is one of 15 fellows chosen from participating HBCUs in Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

“I am grateful to have been selected to be a part of this Fellowship,” she added.

The Teaching in an Inequitable Society: A Call to Action Fellowship is hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in collaborates with the Institute for the Study of Modern Day Slavery at Tougaloo College to further and broaden such an opportunity for growth and elevation in the areas of Early Childhood Education, Child Development, and Child and Family Studies, amongst other related fields.

# HIGHLIGHTS FACULTY & STAFF



## Dr. De'Shoin A. York Has Been Named the 1890 Network Chair to the National Urban Extension Leaders Steering Committee



**DR. DE'SHOIN A. YORK**

Dr. De'Shoin A. York, SU Ag Center's Vice Chancellor for Extension and Outreach, has been appointed as the 1890 Network Chair to the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) Steering Committee.

Dr. York was appointed to the post at the winter meeting of the Association of Extension Administrators in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

NUEL's mission is to advocate and advance the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally.

## Assistant Professor Dr. Dana Pollard Receives CALAS STEM Faculty Workshop Award

Dr. Dana Pollard, an assistant professor in Animal Production Systems at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences has received a \$2,000 award for participating in the Center for the Advancement of Liberal Arts and STEM (CALAS) at Fayetteville State University's Fall 2022 STEM Faculty Workshop. Dr. Pollard was chosen as a participant to work with a CALAS consultant to integrate soft skills into her STEM course through the development of creative and innovative pedagogical approaches.

One of the goals of the CALAS Center is to test new and best practices by integrating liberal arts skills into technical fields.

This aids faculty in incorporating soft skills into a course they teach and enables them to view their course from a unique perspective.

It also compelled Dr. Pollard to include getting the students certified in the course.

"I will use the award to serve as a motivation for me to strive for other opportunities," said Dr. Pollard.

She decided to implement the soft skills from the CALAS award into an online system called FAMACHA. The system encompasses using a FAMACHA card as a diagnostic tool in which to see how anemic a goat, sheep, or camelid is due to parasitism with a gastrointestinal nematode, *Haemonchus contortus*. The FAMACHA system can help in selective deworming.

For additional information on Dr. Pollard's CALAS Award or her online FAMACHA system, please contact her at [dana\\_pollard@suagcenter.com](mailto:dana_pollard@suagcenter.com).



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