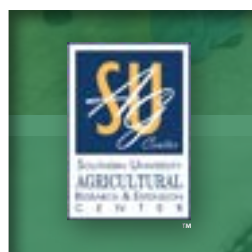
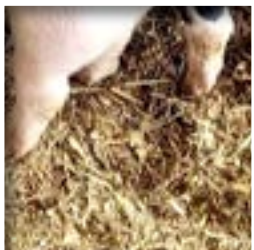


SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY **AG CENTER'S**

SU SEEDS OF *Success!*

A Monthly Newsletter of the Southern University
Ag Center, College of Ag, and Chancellor's Report

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SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

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Chancellor-Dean

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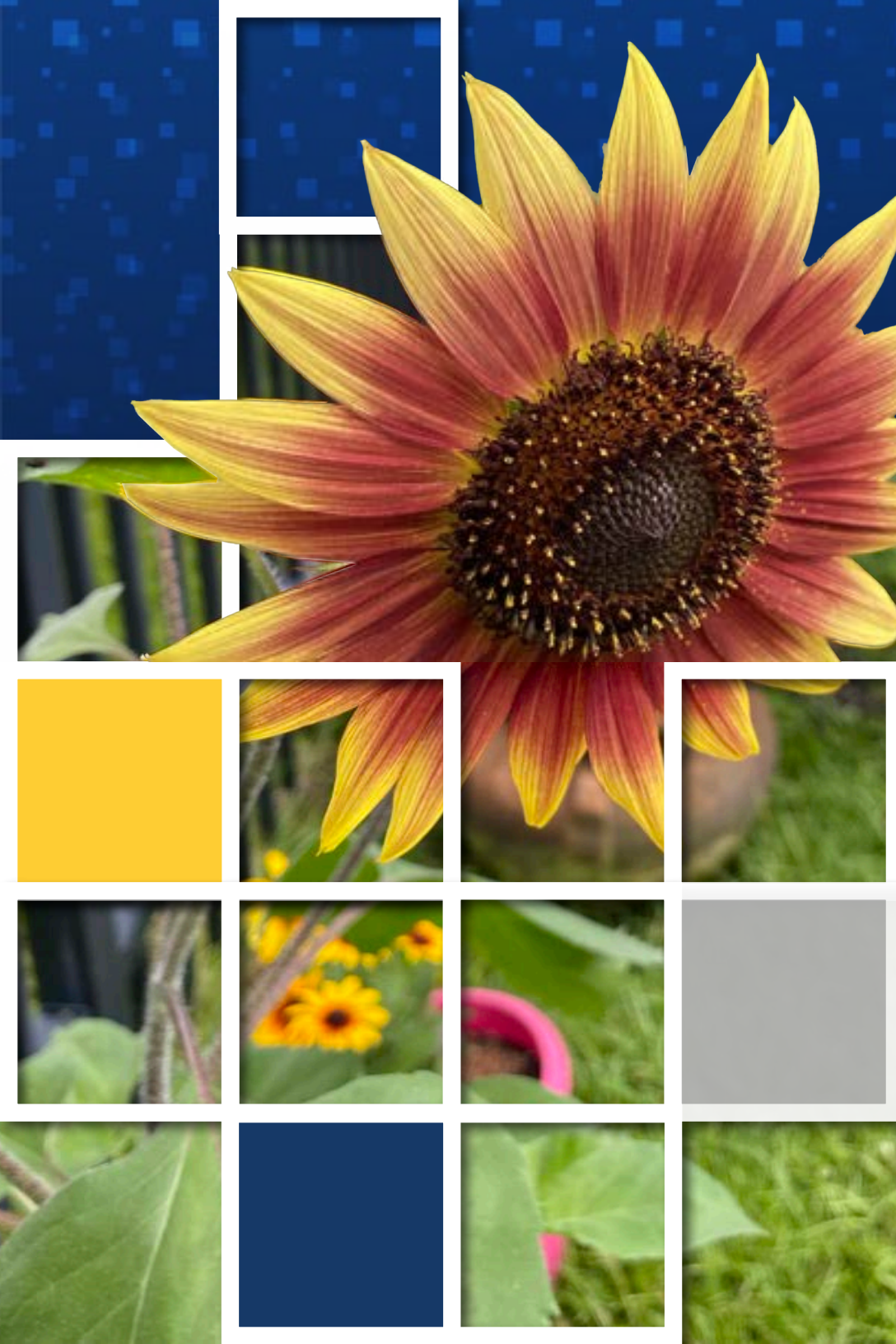
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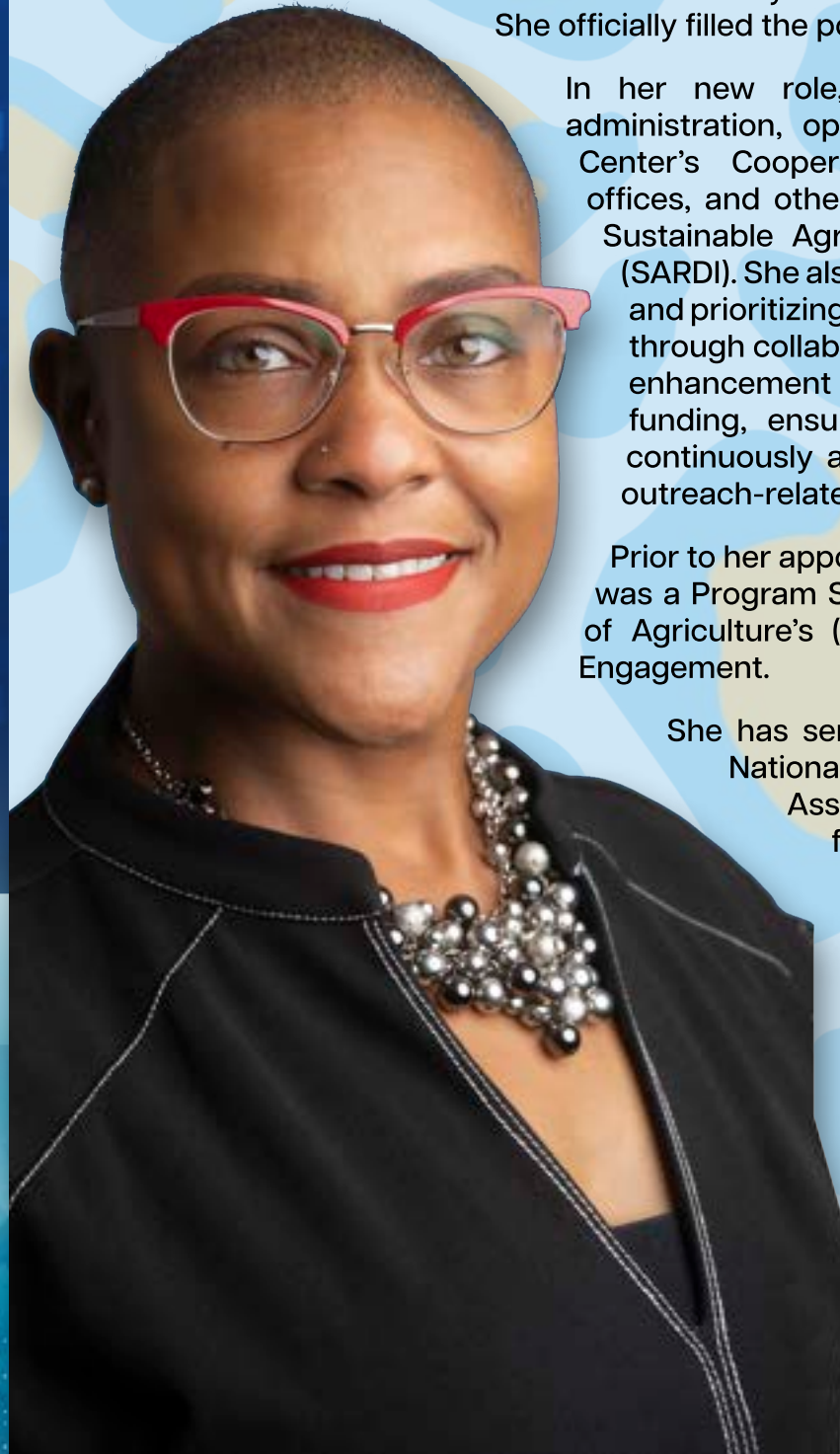
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Dr. Tiffany Franklin Named Vice Chancellor For Extension and Outreach

Dr. Tiffany Franklin has been named the Vice Chancellor for Extension and Outreach at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. The announcement was made during the Southern University Board of Supervisors meeting on May 8, 2025. She officially filled the position on June 1, 2025.



In her new role, Franklin is responsible for extension administration, operations, and supervision of the SU Ag Center's Cooperative Extension Program staff, parish offices, and other related extension facilities, including the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Institute (SARDI). She also provides leadership for strategic planning and prioritizing Extension needs, offers guidance to faculty through collaborations in the development of professional enhancement programs, seeks and obtains extramural funding, ensures compliance mandates are met, and continuously advances and assesses the Extension and outreach-related collaborations and partnerships.

Prior to her appointment as the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Franklin was a Program Specialist for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

She has served as a Science Advisor for the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Associate Youth Specialist and Program Leader for 4-H and Youth Development at the SU Ag Center.

She developed and was awarded more than 20 grant proposals totaling more than \$ 1 million and has served as a grant reviewer on over 13 projects and programs.

Dr. Franklin earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Therapeutic Recreation and Leisure Studies, a Master's of Public Administration in Public Policy and Program Management, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy, all from Southern University.



**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

Dr. Raquel Ayles Named Associate Vice Chancellor For Extension and Outreach

Dr. Raquel Square Ayles has been named the Associate Vice Chancellor for Extension and Outreach at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. The announcement was made during the Southern University Board of Supervisors meeting on May 8, 2025.

Ayles, who currently serves as the SU Ag Center's Youth Development Program Leader and STEAM Specialist, officially filled the position on June 1, 2025.

As the Associate Vice Chancellor of Extension and Outreach, Dr. Ayles is working to develop and oversee high-impact educational and outreach programs; manage and oversee the Extension program's evaluation and accountability process; facilitate trainings and professional development related to evaluation, impact, and reporting; identify the most efficient and effective means to deliver timely research-based information; support and lead efforts in budget planning, grant management, personnel management and fundraising. She will also represent the Ag Center on University councils and committees, and continue her duties of a program leader.

Prior to her employment at the Southern University Ag Center, Ayles served as the Chief Academic Officer of the Algiers Charter School Association, Regional Director and Superintendent of Charter Schools USA in Louisiana, and Principal at both Bains Lower Elementary School and Scotlandville Elementary School.

She is also a member of the Board of Directors at New Schools for Baton Rouge (NSBR).

Dr. Ayles earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, a Master's of Education in Administration and Supervision, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy, all from Southern University. She also received the Educational Specialist in Louisiana School Turnaround certification from Xavier University.



COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

Student Spotlight

Leslie Womack, II: Rooted in Tradition, Growing Toward the Future



For as long as I can remember, Southern University has been more than just a college, it's been a legacy. Growing up in Baton Rouge, I was surrounded by the culture, the excellence, and the boundless opportunities that Southern provides. My mother, along with countless relatives, walked these same halls before me, setting an example of pride and perseverance. When the time came to choose my own path, there was no question—Southern was where I belonged.

That path led me to Plant and Soil Sciences, a field that feels more like a calling than a major. My connection to the land runs deep—long before I set foot in a university classroom, I was learning from my grandparents in Greensburg and Amite, working the soil and cultivating crops. Agriculture isn't just something I study; it's something I live. The ability to nurture the land and understand its science has been ingrained in me since childhood, and Southern has given me the tools to turn that passion into a career.

But my time at Southern has been about more than academics. It has shaped me into a leader. The rigorous coursework has instilled discipline, while the university's close-knit, supportive environment



has encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and build meaningful connections. I've learned the power of relationships, networking, and confidence—qualities that will serve me just as much as my degree.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of the CF Industries Foundation Scholarship. This scholarship has given me the freedom to focus on my education without the constant burden of financial stress. Because of this support, I can be a full-time student, fully immersed in learning, rather than worrying about how I will afford to finish my degree. It has made all the difference in my academic journey, and I plan to make the most of every opportunity. My ultimate goal is to secure a career with the USDA, and Southern has already equipped me with the tools to get there. Through the USDA 1890 workshops and specialized training sessions, I've gained firsthand knowledge of what it takes to excel in the field. Every experience, every lesson, and every mentor I've encountered at Southern has prepared me for the moment when that opportunity arrives.

Southern University isn't just a place where I'm earning a degree – it's a launchpad for my future. It's where I've turned passion into purpose, where I've grown roots in my field, and where I'm being prepared to change the landscape of agriculture for generations to come.

SU College of Ag Holds Its 2nd Annual Vet Explore Program



Nearly 200 high school and college students, some from as far away as Texas, participated in the Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences' (CAHES) 2nd Annual Vet Explore 2025.

The event was held on April 26, 2025, at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena and Multi-purpose Building for 9th–12th graders and undergraduate college students interested in becoming veterinarians.

Vet Explore is the first program of its kind in Louisiana. It provided students with a rare opportunity to gain hands-on experience, engage with professionals, and immerse themselves in the realities of animal care.

J'Kaira Claiborne, a senior from Central High School and Vet Explore second-year participant, said she attended this year's event to see the new aspects of the program, and because she liked the program's structure.



“The hands-on part was the most enjoyable aspect of the program,” said Claiborne. “You’re not just sitting in the room being lectured to. We drew blood from goats, we looked at parasites, we did blood spreads, we learned how to do bandages, and were able to do the bandages ourselves,” she expressed.

Claiborne said she plans to use the information she learned from Vet Explore and apply it next year when she enters college.

Karrington Hall, a senior CAHES Agricultural Sciences Pre-Veterinary Medicine major from Baton Rouge, also commented on the benefits of participating in the program. Hall was a participant in 2024. This year, she served as a volunteer for the program.

“Last year we had a lot of really good hands-on experiences with the animals and livestock, pretty much large animals,” said Hall. I think that’s a really good basis for vet school. Being familiar with everything will definitely help with vet school,” said Hall, who was recently accepted into the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine.

“This year, I have taken on a new role. This is more of an outreach for more kids to not only learn about the College of Ag, but to also give them the experience, and maybe they would want to come to Southern, go to vet school, or whatever else they would want to do in the College of Ag. This event and the CAHES has shaped me into the person I am today,” explained Hall.

“This year we didn’t have the funding that we had last year, so we had to fundraise and to see it all come together. It was great,” expressed Tyra Davis, D.V.M., VET Explore organizer, and CAHES Pre-Vet Program Lead, as she reflected on the event. “For me, knowing that even though this is something really small in the bigger scheme of things, knowing that this little thing can plant the seed in a student and it can grow into something beautiful in their career in veterinary medicine. It’s been rewarding to see our hard work pay off. I’m ready for next year! We’re already talking about it,” added Davis.

For additional information on Vet Explore 2025 or for sponsorship information, email vetexplore_info@suagcenter.com.

College of Ag Holds Luncheon For Graduating Seniors



The College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) held a luncheon for its Spring 2025 Graduating Seniors on May 6, 2025, at the Maurice A. Edmond Multipurpose Building.

Dr. Raquel Ayles, Associate Vice Chancellor for Extension & Outreach and Youth Development Program Leader, provided the occasion/challenge for the event.

Ayles encouraged the students not to let the pressures of life break them, but to allow it to make them as they traveled through the journey called life. She also reminded them that it is okay to protect their peace and not to forget who they are.

The students also participated in a pinning ceremony and were presented with medals.

Students in the Jag Student Training in Academics, Research and Service (S.T.A.R.S.) cohort were also recognized during a special presentation made by Saturn Douglas, CAHES Director of Recruitment and Retention.

Keandrys Dalton, CAHES Student Support Coordinator, provided greetings and closing remarks for the luncheon.





College of Ag Student Eariella London Earned Top Honors During Spring Commencement



Earielle London, an Urban Forestry major from Baton Rouge, La., was named the Chief Student Marshall of Southern University's Spring 2025 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony on May 9, 2025.

The Chief Student Marshall is the student who graduates with the highest-grade point average in the entire graduating class.

Earielle, who is the daughter of Donna and Ivy Butler, said she didn't know about the position until the Fall semester.

"I just wanted to have a higher GPA for myself, but when I realized that it was going to be honored at Southern, I was really excited and just honored that I had the opportunity to experience it," expressed Earielle.

She went on to say that she is thankful to the faculty in the College of Ag for helping her grow into the person she is today.

"Your freshman semester, they start pushing you to do internships and getting real-world experiences," she said. "At first, when I came in, I was not about that. I was like I'm going to have my summers to myself, but I was able to work at Georgia Pacific for a summer, and I realized how great of an experience being at Southern and being in Ag can be. It just helped me grow so much as a person. Going from not wanting to do anything to seeking out opportunities. As long as you put in the work, they are willing to work with you. In Ag, it's such a tight-knit community. I encourage students in the College to go out there, make friends, get to know your professors and don't be afraid to be uncomfortable because that's what makes you grow," she added.

After graduating, Earielle will work with the USDA Forestry Service in Washington to do wildland firefighting. She also plans to attend Beijing Forestry University in China to obtain her master's in forestry.

Earielle received her degree with 52 other CAHES students during the Southern University and A & College's Undergraduate Students Commencement. Ten graduate students obtained their degrees on May 8, 2025 during the University's Spring 2025 Graduate Students Commencement, both held at the F.G. Clark Activity Center on the campus.





CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING SENIORS

Spring 2025

Sixty-four students received degrees from the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences

Below is a list of the students who received degrees from CAHES:

- **Nyle Banks**, from Lenexa, Kans., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business
- **Essence Buckner**, from New Orleans, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences
- **Ahlayna Calhoun**, from Monroe, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine
- **Halle Croff**, from Stone Mountain, Ga., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences
- **Tori Eddie**, from Memphis, Tenn., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences
- **Sincere English**, from Greensburg, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences
- **Gyra Ford**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences
- **Cailan Gatlin**, from Chula Vista, Calif., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine
- **Kailey Glass**, from Fresno, Texas, earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Science
- **Karrington Hall**, from Baton Rouge, La. earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine





CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING SENIORS

Spring 2025

• **Eboni Hayes**, from Ponchatoula, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

• **Lanie Hayes**, from Opelousas, La. earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine

• **Denim Hall**, from Bastrop, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

• **Amaryia Jackson**, from Miramar, Fla., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Plant & Soil

• **Tyler Jackson**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine

• **Kaitlyn Johnson**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in

Plant & Soil Sciences

• **Nickolas Lawrence**, from Hammond, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Plant & Soil Sciences

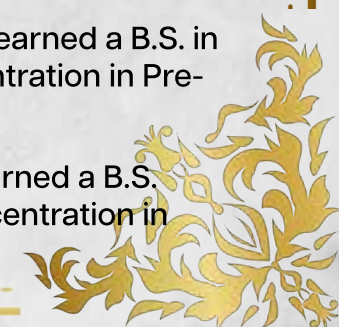
• **Bacari Long**, from Independence, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

• **Bennie Loyd, III**, from Chicago, Ill., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Plant & Soil Sciences

• **Logan Mitchell**, from Reserve, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Plant & Soil Sciences

• **Mckel Muse**, from Belle Rose, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine

• **Kennedy Orr**, from Chicago, Ill., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business





CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING SENIORS

Spring 2025

• **Antoine Richardson**, from Wynne, Ark., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

• **Nicolette Sims**, from Arlington, Texas, earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences

• **Austin Powe**, from Mobile, Ala., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences

• **Leah Reeves**, from Houston, Texas, earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences

• **Madison Smith**, from Newellton, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences

• **Trinity Turner**, from Stone Mountain, Ga., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine

• **Ian Washington**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

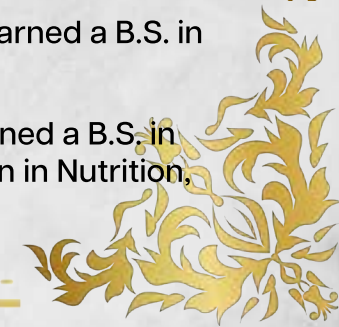
• **Nyla Wilson**, from Clinton, Md., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

• **Sade Woodard**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Animal Sciences

• **Faith Woods**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Agricultural Business

• **Zion Stanley**, from Soperton, Ga., earned a B.S. in Agricultural Sciences

• **Miraj Cole**, from Westwego, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Nutrition, Health, and Wellness





CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING SENIORS

Spring 2025

• **Jimiya Diggs**, from Houma, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Child and Family Studies

• **Pierre Dupre**, from Opelousas, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Nutrition, Health, and Wellness

• **Kamryn Eugene**, from Youngsville, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Apparel Merchandising and Textiles

• **Tia Gordon**, from Opelousas, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Apparel Merchandising and Textiles

• **Kennedy Phillips**, from Desoto, Texas, earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Fashion Merchandising, Design and Textiles

• **Khadijah Jackson**, from Zachary, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Child and Family

Studies

• **Nyasha Sims**, from Mansfield, Texas, earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Child Life Specialist

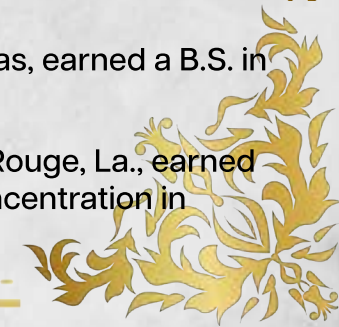
• **Asia Smith**, from Tangipahoa, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Child Development

• **A'Kira Tate**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Child Life Specialist

• **Haley Watts**, from Stone Mountain, Ga., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Child and Family Studies

• **Drew Walker**, from Carrollton, Texas, earned a B.S. in Human Sciences

• **Jordan Washington**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Culinary Food Management





CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING SENIORS

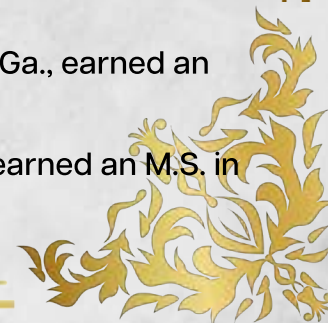
Spring 2025



- **Madisyn Porter**, from Atlanta, Ga., earned a B.S. in Human Sciences with a concentration in Fashion Merchandising, Design and Textiles
- **Asia George**, Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry with a concentration in Environmental Studies
- **Donovan Leday**, from Opelousas, La., earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry with a concentration in Geospatial Technologies
- **Earielle London**, Baton Rouge, La., earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry with a concentration in Environmental Studies
- **Bria Rudison**, from Greensburg, La., earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry with a concentration in General Studies in Urban Forestry
- **Cheyenne Wilkinson**, from Centreville, Miss., earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry with a concentration in

Environmental Studies

- **Kailynn Williams**, from Dallas, Texas, earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry with a concentration in Environmental Studies
- **Calvonta Ard**, from Franklinton, La., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Derrick Boast**, from Opelousas, La., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Latravia Fisher**, from Zachary, La., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Zoie Harris**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Cornelius Jackson**, from Marietta, Ga., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Ruth Kabera**, from Eldoret, Kenya, earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry





CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING SENIORS

Spring 2025

- **Valeria Smart**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Isaiah Smith**, from Baton Rouge, La., earned an M.S. in Urban Forestry
- **Jacob Annan**, from Ghana, West Africa, earned a Ph.D. in Urban Forestry
- **Tyrus Georgetown**, from Maringouin, La., earned a Ph.D. in Urban Forestry



CAHES Student Sterling Brown Appointed Region I National Undergraduate Vice President of MANRRS



Sterling Brown, a senior agriculture business major in the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES), has been appointed the Region I National Undergraduate Vice President of the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) organization. The appointment took place during the organization's 39th National Conference and Career Expo, held in Memphis, Tennessee, from April 2-6.

MANRRS is a collegiate organization dedicated to fostering student success and increasing access to industry connections, internships, scholarships, and other professional development opportunities within agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences.

Brown, a native of Alexandria, LA, began his involvement with the Southern University chapter of MANRRS in 2022. His dedication led to a series of leadership roles within the chapter, serving as the Sergeant at Arms in 2024, progressing to Vice President later that year, and assuming the role of Chapter President in 2025.

He reflects positively on his participation in MANRRS, highlighting its impact on building his resume, expanding his professional and social network, and enhancing his confidence.

In his new national role, Brown's responsibilities will include focusing on membership retention, facilitating communication among chapters in his region, advocating for members, and representing participants both within and beyond the organization. This includes participation in the bi-annual regional clusters and



the national conference, which is scheduled to be held in Dallas, Texas, 2026.

This marks Brown's second application for a national position, and he acknowledges the valuable lessons learned in determination and patience alongside leadership skills.

"I've learned with patience; you have to wait for your time," Brown stated. "Sometimes, when we don't get what we want, we get frustrated and give up. But everyone's timing is different, and you'll know when it's your time. I'm learning that now," he added.

In addition to his national MANRRS responsibilities, Brown remains actively involved in the Southern Institute for Medicinal Plants (SIMP) and the Southern University Agricultural Research & Extension Center, where he contributes to various projects, including groundbreaking viticulture research.

Alongside recent alumnus Christian Jacobs, Brown is a founding member of Ag Business Students United (ABSU), an organization established to serve and represent agriculture business and economics students. The pair successfully created a scholarship fund that has awarded \$1,000 in scholarships to five CAHES students.

While his national accomplishments are significant, Brown recognizes the support he has received. He credits Dr. Jodi Morton, Assistant Professor in Agricultural Sciences and Technology, with encouraging his initial involvement in MANRRS. Brown also extends his gratitude to Dr. Janana Snowden, Director of SIMP and dedicated MANRRS advisor, Chianti Primus, Senior Administrative Assistant and MANRRS co-advisor, and Dr. Marlin Ford, Research Assistant Professor/Urban Agricultural Specialist.

Brown is the third Southern University student to hold a national position under Dr. Morton's tenure.

Following his graduation in Spring 2026, Brown plans to establish his professional career, with an interest in international agriculture, before continuing his involvement with MANRRS at the professional level.

Sterling Brown's achievements and dedication serve as an inspiring example for all students in the College of Ag.

C.H.E.F. Camp 2025 Brings Food, Fun, and Nutrition Education To Louisiana's Youth



The Southern University Ag Center's SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program is continuing its impactful summer initiative Creating Healthy, Enjoyable Foods (C.H.E.F.) Camp 2025. While several camps have already taken place in early summer, there's still time for families to take advantage of this free, fun, and educational opportunity.

Hosted across 10 of the 13 parishes the program serves, C.H.E.F. Camp teaches children more than just cooking skills – it connects them to the source of their food and helps them understand how nutrition shapes their everyday lives. Through hands-on activities, students explore where food comes from, how it's grown, and how to make healthier choices for themselves and their families.

“Understanding the journey of food – from soil to plate – empowers children to think differently about what they eat and why it matters,” says Joshua McDonald, the program director of SNAP-Ed. “Our goal is to instill lifelong habits that lead to healthier communities.”

So far this summer, camps have taken place in West Carroll, Avoyelles, East Carroll, Richland, St. James, East Baton Rouge, Morehouse, Evangeline, and Madison Parishes. But it's not over yet – upcoming camps will be held in the following parishes:

- Ascension – July 21–25
- Jefferson Davis – July 22–24

C.H.E.F. Camp is open to youth between the ages of nine and twelve. Each session includes lessons on basic nutrition, food safety, and preparing easy and healthy meals. Children leave with more than just recipes – they gain a better understanding of how food affects their bodies, minds, and communities.



SU College of Ag and the Ag Center's Cooperative Extension Program Bring Agriculture To Life at Local Elementary Schools



The Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) and the SU Ag Center's Cooperative Extension Program collaborated to spark curiosity and excitement about agriculture and nutrition among young learners in East Baton Rouge Parish.

On Friday, May 2, 2025, the team visited Delmont Elementary School for Career Day, where eager Pre-K students got an interactive introduction to the world of agriculture. Through an engaging nutrition lesson and hands-on activities, students explored healthy food choices and even had the unique opportunity to meet friendly farm animals. The experience was filled with smiles, laughter, and plenty of learning as the young scholars discovered where their food comes from and why healthy eating matters.

The agricultural adventure continued on Wednesday, May 8, at Ryan Elementary School, where the Cooperative Extension Program and the College of Ag brought the barnyard right to the schoolyard. Students were thrilled to interact with goats, rabbits, and even a friendly puppy, turning their campus into a space of exploration and discovery. Every corner was buzzing with excitement as children engaged with animals and asked questions, deepening their understanding of agriculture and animal care.

These outreach events are part of the Southern University Ag Center's ongoing commitment to educate and inspire the next generation through community engagement. By bringing agriculture and nutrition education directly to schools, the Ag Center and College of Ag continue to plant seeds of knowledge that will grow for years to come.



Undergraduate Students Research Spotlight

Articles in this section were written with information provided by CAHES students Tanisha Bailey, Christopher Hills, Jr., and J'Me Bryant, respectively.

Animal Science Student Tanisha Bailey Is Learning Research Methods From Her Broiler Research Project

CAHES Freshman Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Tanisha Bailey, has been conducting research with Dr. Jodi Morton on the effects of feeding a fermented complete feed diet on 4-6-week-old broilers.

Through her research, the Chicago, Ill. native has learned the importance of procedures and data collection.

"This project demonstrated to me that sometimes results aren't linear, and you may encounter problems you must fix as you go along," Bailey stated.

She went on to say that participating in a research project is a valuable learning experience that undergraduate students can benefit from in the future, no matter where they plan on taking their careers.



Christopher Hills Is Using His Undergraduate Research Project To Gain Career Preparation

Christopher Hill, Jr., a Sophomore Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Animal Science from New Orleans, is gaining hands-on experience through his research on the effects of a fermented complete diet on 4-6-week-old weaned pigs.

His research with Dr. Jodi Mort is working to identify a low-cost way to reduce weaning stress and maintain feed efficiency in pigs.

He encourages other students to participate in research projects to get hands-on learning.

“This can help with career preparation. Part of this includes networking so they can connect with professors and the people they work with to foster a sense of community and support system,” he stated.

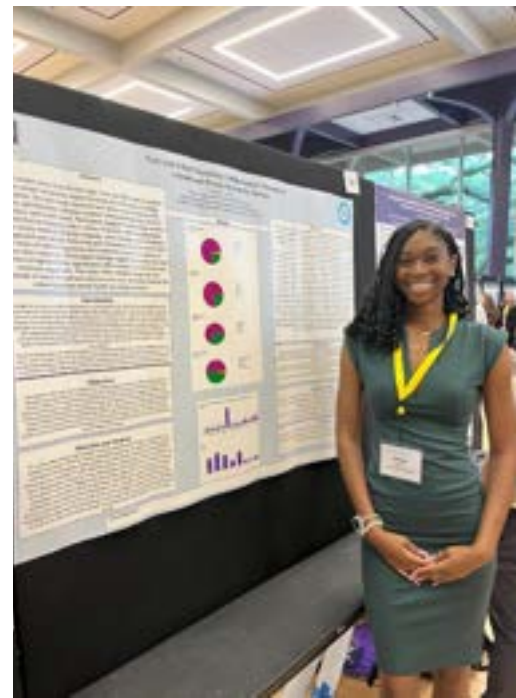


CAHES Student J'Me Bryant is Examining College Students' Reactions to Animals and Perspectives on Pet Therapy

Senior Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine, J'Me Bryant, has been conducting research through her project Paws and Effect: Examining College Students' Reactions to Animals and Perspectives on Pet Therapy with Dr. Tyra Davis.

The Houma, La., native is examining different perspectives of implementing pet therapy on campus to decrease levels of stress, depression, and anxiety across the Southern University campus, as well as hearing student feedback on allowing pets on campus.

“Pushing to implement more pet therapy events on campus can serve as a gateway for students to release their stress and preserve their peace,” expressed Bryant. “Students should get involved because to present one's best self, they must take care of themselves both physically and emotionally,” she added.



Need For Phosphorus Supplements For Beef Heifers On Pastures



This research article was co-authored by C.P. Bagley, SU Ag Center Vice Chancellor for Research and Director of the Beef Research Institute; Robert Palfreyman, Tennessee Natural Resource Conservation Service Specialist; and Jennifer Crabtree, Auburn University Ph.D. Graduate Assistant.

Beef cattle and calves are part of the farm enterprise in just over 70% of all farms in the U.S. Like humans, cattle crave salt and consume it at a rate of about 3 oz per head daily. Mineral supplements are based on cattle's consumption of salt, with other minerals and vitamins added in proportion to the 3 oz of salt average daily intake. Mineral supplements are routinely fed to beef cattle herds, with costs per ton ranging from just over \$200 to \$1,000/ ton. Much of the cost variance is based on the level of supplemental phosphorus (P) in the mineral mixture, usually supplemented at 3 – 6% of the



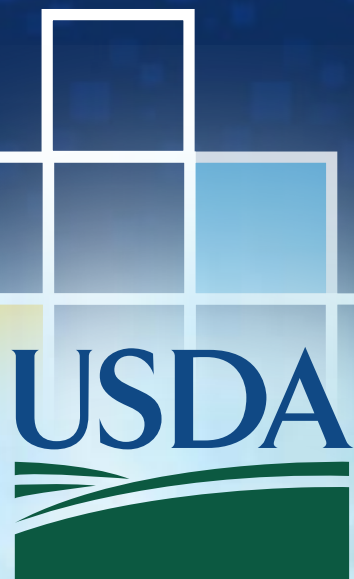
mineral supplement. As an example, 1 ton (2,000 lbs.) of salt sells for about \$200 per ton. One ton of 100% P sells for about \$5,000 per ton, indicating that as the P level in the mixture increases, so does the cost per ton. Cow needs for P are usually greatest when cows are fed hay in winter, calling for a P supplement.

The production of ethanol and sweeteners from corn has created new co-products for animal feeding enterprises. Effectively, the starch in corn (about 60% of the grain) is turned into ethanol or sweeteners, leaving behind a product high in protein (25%), fat, and a highly digestible fiber. This leftover product is called “Distiller’s Dried Grains and Solubles” (DDGS). This product has about the same energy content (TDN) as corn, but a higher crude protein content, and it can be a good protein supplement in beef cattle diets. Interestingly, DDGS is relatively high in P (corn is not), with the source of the additional P coming from the washing process, which adds P to the feed. Unlike P in most grain sources, this P is in a highly digestible form.

A study was conducted using crossbred 14-month-old beef heifers (n=36) initially weighing 628 lbs. Heifers were randomly allotted to one pasture and remained there during the study, and mineral treatments were rotated between groups. Clovers tend to have higher levels of P than grasses, so heifers remained on the same pasture for each of the three treatments since clover content in the three pastures was different. Mineral treatments included: 1. a complete mineral premix (CMP), no P, 2. CMP plus enzyme, and 3. CMP plus 4% P with mineral supplements available to heifers at all times during the study. All heifers were group-fed 2 lbs. per head daily of DDGS fed in open troughs. Heifers were on treatments for 28 days for each of three feeding periods, brought to the working facility at the end of each period, and individually weighed, fecal samples taken for mineral analysis, and serum blood samples taken and analyzed for P and several other minerals. Forages were harvested every two weeks, and dry matter availability and analyzed for forage quality characteristics.

These results indicate that in situations where producers use DDGS as a protein supplement, there appears to be adequate available P in DDGS, so using a mineral supplement high in P is not necessary. All heifers had similar P blood levels regardless of the mineral treatment. Usually in experiments, we desire to find differences; in this study finding no differences in P blood levels meant when feeding DDGS, additional P in the mineral supplement had no beneficial effect. A concern about using DDGS is that quality can vary due to a lack of consistency of the product. Generally, darker brown DDGS is of lower nutrient value than the more golden-colored DDGS, but due to the “washing” process in DDGS production, all tend to have relatively high amounts of P in the feed supplement.

Staff From the USDA Nutrition Hub Visited the Agriaquaculture Center of Excellence (AACE)



USDA Nutrition Hub
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Nutrition Hub staff members Drs. Fatemeh Malekian, Miriam Contin, and Gabriela Rodriguez visited the Agriaquaculture Center of Excellence (AACE) facility in Harvey, La., on April 29, 2025, to gain information on the use of aquaponics in local communities.

Aquaponics combines fish farming (aquaculture) and soilless plant cultivation (hydroponics), allowing communities to grow fresh, nutrient-rich vegetables and protein sources in a closed system, even in areas with limited soil or resources needed for traditional agricultural activities.

Following the meeting, the staff members toured the more than 10,000 sq. ft. facility and viewed the preparation of plant seeds, the storage of live fish, and how the water was filtered from the fish tanks and led to growing plants (romaine lettuce and basil) in the greenhouse. The staff also learned how fish feces are composted and used as fertilizer, and had the opportunity to harvest lettuce, which was grown in water.

Established in 2024, the Agriaquaculture Center of Excellence is Louisiana's largest closed-loop hydroponic aquaculture facility. The Center cultivates fresh, locally sourced vegetation while serving as a business incubator and workforce training hub. It works closely with local and regional partners to support local businesses, ensuring they have the resources, funding opportunities, and mentorship needed to expand their operations.

With the information from the visit, the Nutrition Hub plans to develop educational programs on sustainability, health, and food systems, hands-on training for students and community members, and local solutions to address food deserts and malnutrition.



Faculty & Staff Highlights



DR. LASHUNDA HODGES



DR. TYRA DAVIS

Dr. LaShunda Hodges Was Accepted Into the Center For Genome Editing and Recording and the Tennessee State CRISPR Course Workshop

Dr. LaShunda Hodges, Research Professor of Soil and Plant Sciences at the SU Ag Center, was accepted into the Center of Genome Editing and Recording (CGER) and Tennessee State University's CRISPR Course workshop.

The inaugural workshop was held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Whitehead Institute in Cambridge, MA from July 7-11, 2025.

While at the the Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR-Cas9) course, Dr. Hodges participated in a two-day faculty workshop and was trained on-site at TSU in her degree offerings.

The project seeks to incorporate cutting-edge gene editing technologies with a focus on CRISPR-Cas9 based genome editing into the curriculum at Tennessee State University and train a generation of HBCU students and instructors well-versed in the principles and ethics of gene editing, who go on to become future agricultural policy makers, scientists, and agribusiness managers in keeping with the National Science Foundation's mission to promote the progress of science.

To attend the course, participants had to be recommended by a collaborative scientist based on the applicant's previous STEM research.

"I feel blessed and honored that a collaborative scientist thought enough of me and my work to recommend me for this innovative project," expressed Hodges.

An Article Written By Dr. Tyra Davis Has Been Featured In the Journal of the Association of Veterinary Technician Educators

The Journal of the Association of Veterinary Technician Educators (JAVE) has published the article, "Best F.R.E.N.S. - You and your Co-learners: A Student-Centered Approach to Success in the Classroom," written by Tyra Davis, D.V.M., CAHES Assistant Professor and Pre-Vet Program Lead, in its Winter 2025 issue.

The article explains how the implementation of pre- and post-course surveys helped her adapt her teaching approach to her students' needs and can be used as a case study for professors. Read the full article at, <https://lnkd.in/eaBYfYGb>.



SU AG PODCAST

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from the time we wake up, until we go to bed.
From clothing, gasoline, food, and bed linens
— agriculture is all around us!”*

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Hosted by:

Dexter “Dex” Newman



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