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## CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

**Dr. Leodrey Williams**

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**Presented to:**

**Board of Supervisors**

**Southern University and A & M College System**

*"Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success"*

## Brown Named Interim Chancellor of SU Ag Center

The Southern University Board of Supervisors has named Dr. Adell Brown Jr., as Interim Chancellor for the SU Ag Center effective July 1, 2015. Prior to now, Brown served as Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, and currently as Executive Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Research.



Dr. Brown, Jr.

Brown, who has worked at Southern for 39 years, also teaches economics and finance on the Southern University Baton Rouge campus. He is the Immediate Past President/Chair of the 100 Black Men of Metropolitan Baton Rouge, a non-profit organization aimed at helping the youth. Brown will replace longtime SU Ag Center [Chancellor Leodrey Williams](#), who is retiring, on June 30.

## Vice Chancellors Present 1890 Celebration at Senate Committee on Ag Meeting

Southern University Ag Center Vice Chancellors Drs. Gina Eubanks and Adell Brown made a presentation on the accomplishments of the SU Ag Center and the Center's celebration of the 125th Anniversary of the signing of the Second Morrill Act of 1890.

The presentation was made on May 26 during the Louisiana Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural Development's meeting at the Louisiana State Capitol.

After the meeting, Dr. Brown pinned an 1890 lapel pin to the jacket of the committee's chairman, Senator Francis C. Thompson.

The Second Morrill Act of 1890 included the stipulation that African Americans were to be included in the U.S. Land-Grant University Higher Education System without discrimination. Making Southern University and 18 other universities part of what was known as the "Negro Land-Grant Institutions."

Today the institutions, more commonly known as 1890 Land-Grant Universities, continue to lead the collaborative vision of a better world while addressing today's challenges and focusing on providing lifelong learning opportunities for all.

For a complete listing of scheduled events for the 1890 year-long celebration, visit the SU Ag Center website at <http://www.suagcenter.com/PageDisplay.asp?p1=2251>.



Vice Chancellors Brown and Eubanks address LA Senate Committee on Ag at state Capitol



Dr. Adell Brown fastens an 1890 pin to the lapel of Senator Francis C. Thompson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ag

## Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute Successful

The third session of the Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute was held in the SU Ag Center, May 6-9. The theme for the session was "Connecting the Dots for Prosperity" and focused on those things that small farmers and urban gardeners can do to promote, protect and prepare the business for potential challenges. The session began on the first morning with three-hour training on using social media to promote a business, branding the business and developing an elevator speech. Mrs. Frankie I. Gould, of the LSU AgCenter was the facilitator. This was followed by Drs. Adell Brown and Ben Lukongo sharing information to the participants about whom they should partner with to strategically prepare their business for success and what information to gather in making those types of decisions.

Other speakers included Professor John Pierre, Vice Chancellor of the Southern University Law Center, who shared information on Legal Risks. Dora Ann



Participants interacting outdoors before dinner



Participants strike a pose between sessions

Hatch, LSU AgCenter informed the class about the legalities associated with hosting tours, workshops and demonstrations on the farm (Agro Tourism) and through video conferencing. Mr. Arthur Neal, USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington, DC spoke to the group about the programs and services offered by the AMS in general and specifically about opportunities for producers to market their foods locally. Kia Bickham, East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor's Office addressed the class about local efforts to revitalize the city's focus on gardening as a tool to engage the community. Dawn Mellion-Patin, Project Director gave presentations on Servant Leadership and the Top 10 Mistakes that Leaders Make.

The highlight of the session was the Local Foods Dinner held in the Sustainable Urban Agricultural Demonstration Farm featuring seasonal foods grown locally, including salad greens and cherry tomatoes grown on-site.

## SU Ag Center Project Holds Garden Graduation

More than 75 students received certificates of completion for participating in the Southern University Ag Center's School Garden Program. Students from Southern University Laboratory School, Scotlandville Magnet High School and Scotlandville Pre-Engineering Middle Academy,

were honored during a graduation ceremony held at the SU Ag Center on April 29.

The year-long United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) project, titled "Eradicating Food Deserts through School Gardens," taught

students basic, transferable gardening techniques from the SU Ag Center's self-produced curriculum.



Dr. Brown addresses students at garden graduation ceremony

Carolyn Hill, Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

(BESE) District 8 Representative, served as keynote speaker for the event. She encouraged graduates to use what they have learned from the program to help them grow in life.

Ten students were also awarded \$100 stipends for participating in an essay and video contest. Students



Students listen to the keynote speaker during the program

were required to complete a written or video essay demonstrating “The effect of fast food on your health: Good or Bad.” Additionally, the students had to actively participate in at least 34 hours of the SU Ag Center’s “Eradicating Food Deserts” indoor classroom and outdoor garden lessons to be eligible to enter the contest.

For more information about the SU Ag Center’s School Gardening Program, contact Tiffany Franklin or Stephanie Elwood at 225-771-2242.

## SU Ag Center Specialist Presents at Risk Management Education Conference

Dawn Mellion-Patin, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Agriculture, submitted a 30-minute presentation titled “Wisteria Alliance,” which was accepted for presentation at the 2015 Extension Risk Management Education National Conference held in Minneapolis, MN from April 29 - 30, 2015. Her presentation was included in the conference proceedings available at <http://agrisk.umn.edu>.



Dr. Mellion-Patin

Conference participants learn about what is working to help producers effectively manage the following types of risks associated with their agribusinesses: Production, Price or Market, Financial, Legal/Institutional, and Human Risk.

The Extension Risk Management Education National Conference brings together private and public sector educators, crop insurance agents, lenders, and other agricultural professionals. The biennial conference allows this diverse group to share ongoing and emerging successful risk management education efforts which target agricultural producers and their families.

The Wisteria Alliance is a relatively new training series offered by the Southern University Ag Center, with the goal of providing practical, hands-on activities for women who live on farms, those interested in starting a farm, and /or urban / community gardeners. All of the trainings are designed for women, and are primarily conducted by women. During the training sessions, facilitators strive to create an atmosphere where women are comfortable asking questions, and learning different tasks normally reserved for men, in a warm nurturing environment.

## SU Ag Center Participates in National Extension and Research Conference

The SU Ag Center was well represented at the National Extension and Research Administrative Officers Conference (NERAOC) held May 3-7, 2015 in San Diego, California. The conference was attended by more than 500 participants targeting administrative staff from across the United States, its territories and the Islanders who work in areas such as evaluation, finance, grants, human resources, etc. This annual conference brings the officers of the United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) to the same table with Land-Grant institutions (1862, 1890, 1994, HIS, 2008), experiment stations, and territories to discuss important issues affecting agricultural research and extension.

The theme of the 2015 conference was “Golden Opportunities.” The United States Congress, after



Role-playing during session

debating for about two years, finally passed the Farm Bill dubbed, ‘The Agriculture Act of 2014.’ This year’s conference included some sessions focused on the Farm Bill, the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the federal government. NERAOC provides an avenue for the USDA/NIFA experts to inform partners about new policies and procedures and how they may impact funding of several programs.

USDA/NIFA is stepping up its mandate for actual evaluation to show outcomes and impacts on funded projects/ activities. Information obtained is used to defend the USDA/ NIFA budget before Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. Linda Batiste, Director of Finance at the SU Ag Center, in collaboration with LSU Ag Center staff presented a session entitled “Leading from any Chair.”

## Agents in East Carroll Parish Conduct ‘From Library to Garden’ Workshop

East Carroll Parish Extension Agents, Thomas Nyatta Legiandenyi; Donna Lee; Lakeisha Lucas-Powell, EFNEP education; Mary Reed; Patricia Johnkin; and Brittany Seay, in collaboration with Ms. Krishanda Mayers, Director of the East Carroll Parish Library, conducted the annual “From the Library to the Garden” workshop on May 11. The purpose of this program is to encourage the youth to have an interest in agriculture and gardening while motivating them to develop a love for reading. The youth had an opportunity to learn about raised-bed gardens, how



Participants plant seeds

to care for food plants, and the nutritional value of vegetables. Each youth planted sunflower seeds in the raised bed garden and will follow the progress of the plants during the summer. A book on gardening was read to the youth and students without library cards obtained them. Previously, the workshop was held once a year, but future plans are to conduct the workshop twice a year in the spring and summer.

“The workshop was a great success as it afforded the youth an opportunity to appreciate the food

crops grown in East Carroll Parish by seeing and touching the plants,” said Dr. Legiandenyi who

serves in the capacity of Extension County Agent in East and West Carroll Parishes.

## SU Ag Center at Hammond Junior High School for College and Career Fair

The SU Ag Center and US Department of Agriculture spent the day with the students of Hammond Junior High Magnet School at the school’s sponsored College and Career Fair on May 20. The event provided 8<sup>th</sup> graders with the opportunity to learn about the SU Ag Center’s Building Opportunities through Leadership Development (BOLD) project. This project seeks to improve the leadership development capacity of rural and under-served communities throughout Louisiana.

The goal of career fair was to create an effective Agricultural Academy in St. Helena and Tangipahoa Parishes and to provide learning



Collaborators l-r: Brandon Bates, Nicolette Gordon, Ahmad R. Robertson, and Terrick Boley

opportunities for youth while training the next generation of sustainable agriculture leaders. This also allows professionals to spend time with youth on a one-on-one basis.

The event provided the opportunity for participants to experience agriculture and youth development in a positive way. Interacting with youth allows adults to build stronger relationships with the future generation. The event also gave the youth an opportunity to explore possible career paths and provide insight into the specific requirements, daily responsibilities, and extraordinary experiences associated with various careers.

## Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives Wraps up Spring Computer Training

Having fun and learning about computers can all happen at the same time. That is what happened during the Spring Computer Training program at the Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives (SCRI). The program wrapped up its eight-week Spring Computer Training Program for adults on Wednesday, May 11, 2015. This class targeted adults 55 and older from St. Landry Parish, in collaboration with “Experience Works Group,” and taught on topics ranging from basic Introduction to Computer, Microsoft Office, to Internet use.

The mission of this program was to provide adults hands-on experience and education on computer technologies to enhance their lives and enable them to share their knowledge and wisdom.



Training completers celebrated with a cake

The computer training program helped participants build their confidence when using computers in the library, at home, at work, or when looking for a job. There were 10 students who took advantage of these free classes and received certificates of completion for participating in this program. The computer class was well received by participants, and many are looking forward to the next computer session.

This is one of several programs the SCRI offers to improve the socioeconomic well-being of citizens in rural communities within its ten-parish region of Southwest Louisiana. The Center will continue to

provide community programs that address the scientific, technological, social, economic, and cultural needs.

For more information about computer training program, contact Goldie C. Jordan at 337-943-2410 or email [goldie\\_jordan@suagcenter.com](mailto:goldie_jordan@suagcenter.com)

## SU Ag Center Holds Hibiscus Workshop in Amite

The SU Ag Center has conducted research on *Hibiscus sabdariffa* for years and found that the plant is packed with health benefits. The research findings have been shared with Extension staff across the state and through presentations, workshops and publications to create awareness. Increased interest in natural products to maintain good health has made *Roselle* hibiscus production a high cash-value functional crop for small farmers in Louisiana.



Workshop participants absorbed in presentation

The 2015 Roselle Hibiscus Workshop attracted over 35 farmers and Louisiana Master Gardeners to the Tangipahoa Ag Extension Office in Amite on May 21. The hibiscus planting season is here and producers in St. Helena and Tangipahoa Parishes are busy in the fields cultivating their crops. The *Roselle* plant plays a dual role as an ornamental and edible plant. Mid-April is a great time to plant roselle hibiscus with an expected harvest period within 180 days - late September until November before the first frost occurs. As the season progresses and flowers bloom with bright red calyces lining the stem, the farmers are set to harvest the plant for tea, jelly and other value-added products.

The workshop was presented by Southern University and Louisiana State University Ag Centers, and provided individuals involved in vegetable production with information on everything from production to value-added products made from the roselle.

Workshop activities began with a welcome and introduction by SU Ag Center Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent for St. Helena & Tangipahoa Parishes, Ahmad R. Robertson.

Next came a series of presentations on the following topics:

- *Roselle Hibiscus* Production & Research, presented by Dr. Kit Chin, Professor, Plant Science, SU Ag Center.
- Disease Management, presented by Dr. Melainie Ivey, Assistant Professor & Plant Pathologist, LSU Ag Center.
- Health benefits and medicinal uses of Roselle Hibiscus, presented by Dr. Janana Snowden, Researcher, Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition & Health, SU Ag Center.
- Food preservation and safety of hibiscus, presented by Dr. Fatemeh Malekian, Professor, Food Science and Nutrition, SU Ag Center.
- Processing Roselle Hibiscus, presented by Mila Berhane, Senior Research Associate, SU Ag Center.

Producers left the workshop with information that will help them become prepared for a niche market, and gained knowledge from the presenters on edible and medicinal uses of the roselle.

**Edible uses:** the calyx is rich in citric acid and pectin therefore it is useful for making jams, and jellies; also used to add red color and flavor to herb tea, and can be roasted and used as a coffee substitute. A refreshing and very popular beverage can be made by boiling the calyces, sweetening it with sugar and sharing with your family.

**Medicinal uses:** The *Roselle* Hibiscus has been used as folk remedy in the treatment of cancer, cough, fever, boils, heart ailments, hypertension,

and cuts. The leaves and flowers are used internally as a tonic tea for digestive and kidney functions.

## SU Ag Center Welcomes Guest from US Department of Agriculture

The Southern University Ag Center welcomed Tim Sheehan on May 12, 2015 for a brief tour and presentation. Mr. Sheehan, Senior Program Manager of the Borlaug Fellowship Programs was visiting from the United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Office of Capacity Building and Development, Trade and Scientific Exchanges Division to share information on the Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program. Following his presentation to a handful faculty and staff of the Ag Center and SUBR Campus, Sheehan was led on a tour of the SU Ag Center research labs and facility.



Mr. Sheehan

and middle-income countries strengthen sustainable agricultural practices by providing scientific training and collaborative research opportunities for mid-career researchers, policymakers, and university faculty. The program matches participants with experts in their field at U.S. host institutions.

The program objectives are to build relationships that advance agricultural trade and capacity building through scientific exchanges and to help developing nations strengthen agricultural practices by providing scientific training and collaborative research.

The full detail of the program is available at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/borlaug-fellowship-program>

The program is named after Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, Father of the Green Revolution. It helps developing

## Braud Cattle Farm Field Day Inspires Producers

More than 200 ranchers, farmers, families and Tangipahoa Master Gardeners attended the 2015 Braud Cattle Farm Field Day at the Braud Cattle Ranch in Amite on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The event, which was organized in collaboration with Mr. Malcolm Braud, the Southern University and Louisiana State University Ag Centers, provided individuals involved in the beef cattle industry with information on topics from cattle handling to land management techniques.



Dr. Hay gives a presentation

Ahmad R. Robertson, Extension Agent for St. Helena & Tangipahoa Parishes, SU Ag Center brought welcome and introduction, followed by a series of presentations on the following topics:

- Body Condition Scoring by Dr. Gary Hay, Professor and Extension Specialist of Dairy Science at the LSU AgCenter.
- Pasture Improvement & Management, presented by Dr. Ron Strahan, Associate Professor at the LSU College of Agriculture's School of Plant, Environmental & Soil Sciences.

- Herd Health Programs Prevention vs. Treatment and Beef Cattle Herd Management Practices Surveys by Ahmad R. Robertson.

The afternoon session focused on castration, feeder cattle, new animal health products and regulations. Producers left the field day with information that will help them become prepared for the current market, enable them to build their own cow herds, and better manage their pastures.

“If you follow the cattle market at all, you’ll know that cattle prices are at historical highs. This market price increase has certainly been reflected on the meat counter at your grocery store,” said Robertson. “St. Helena & Tangipahoa beef cattle producers who are enjoying the increase in prices are also facing those same high prices when purchasing cattle to expand their herds,” he added.

## SU Ag Center Offers Small Business Owners Training and Counseling

On May 5, a client visited the Center for Rural and Small Business Development (CRSBD) to request assistance in creating a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization. The entity would operate a charter school for at risk school children including dropouts, individuals with learning disabilities and GED candidates as referred by public school officials. The Center for Rural and Small Business Development will help secure funding which will come from grants, private donors, foundations, and fund raisers. Also, on May 15 clients visited the CRSBD to review business plans and request counseling to properly operate their newly opened construction business. The clients indicated that they became licensed construction contractors after participating in the 2015 Procurement Conference.



Hall assists participants during training

Business Development Specialist Eual Hall held additional Excel Business training sessions on April 30, May 7, and May 21 for small business owners in Tallulah. These existing and potential small business owners are committed to gaining knowledge to assist them in starting and

maximizing their business ventures. The complete small business training package consists of five Excel sessions on the topics of: Entrepreneurship Quick Books, identifying Target Markets, Contract Procurement, Supply Chain Management and Project Management. Participants include 6-10 repeat students who are committed to the cause of improving and growing assets.

The May 21 session focused on Supply Chain Management. This training was a continuation of the Small Business Tract Series Training for potential and existing small business owners to improve the economic and community development of the area. Six participants received the training. Attendance was below average due to school graduation ceremonies in the area.

On May 8, another client in New Roads received assistance in acquiring a Point of Sales (POS) computer system to perform data and sales gathering performance for his business effective July 30, 2015.

Also, on May 19, Ms. Gloria London, Director, Center for Rural and Small Business Development at the SU Ag Center counseled two participants who

are in the process of launching a non-profit daycare business. The clients received information on how to register their non-profit organization.

## Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

**Sarah Sims**, Extension Aide, Madison Parish, held five container gardening workshops at commodity sites, Council on Aging and housing communities in May with 250 participants. First Thursday Lunch and Learn with 18 participants on May 7<sup>th</sup>. She also organized weekly small business classes conducted by the Center for Rural & Small



Container garden participant admires her creation

Business Development staff from March - May on Thursdays at the Tallulah Ag Center Office. Beautification Commission planting in downtown attracted 20 volunteers, May 15 & 16; Farm Safety Day with 125 youth participants at Wright Elementary, May 22; and Beautification Memorial Day appreciation for Veterans, at the new Veterans Park convening 75 community members on May 25.

### SU Ag Center's Urban Ag Farm Open for Tours

The Southern University Ag Center's Sustainable Urban Agriculture Demonstration Farm has launched its farm tours. The show-and-tell garden is for everyone. This educational garden gives information on vegetable varieties, planting instruction, composting techniques, and other relevant information. The farm tours will be available throughout the year. To schedule a tour, please contact Dawn Mellion-Patin or Zanetta Augustine at the SU Ag Center by calling 225-771-2242.

## Upcoming Events

**June 18-20:** Annual Youth and Family Exposition. Contact Wanda Burke at 225-771-2242.

**June 20:** BOLD community leadership tour will focus on conflict management, discussion, lecture, Social Media and Technology Training. Contact Kenyetta Nelson-Smith at 225-771-5598 for full detail.

**July 22-25:** Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute Summer tour in Mississippi. Alcorn State University is the host for this session. For more information, contact Dawn Mellion-Patin or Zanetta Augustine at 225-771-2242.