

Southern University
Agricultural Research and Extension Center
Chancellor's report

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Southern University and A&M System



Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success

The Southern University Board of Supervisors voted to merge the Southern University College of Agriculture with the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center during the board's April 22 meeting.

The move will transfer the academic unit located on the SU Baton Rouge campus to the Ag Center; allowing the operating functions of the three land-grant units (Teaching, Research and Cooperative Extension) to be located under one umbrella.

The Ag Center currently employs 115 employees (includes vacancies), with field staff in 36 parishes across the state. The Center, which is overseen by a Chancellor, consists of research and extension units and has an operating budget of \$7,809,249 (for 2016).

The college encompasses the academic arm of the land-grant mission. It currently employs seven part-time and 15 full time employees.

"We're excited," said Dr. Doze Butler, Associate Dean of the College of Sciences and Agriculture, about the merger. "It's good for the academic program," she added.



Former SU Ag Center Chancellor Dr. Leodrey Williams speaks to the members of the Southern University Board of Supervisors during the April 22 board meeting

"It is a great day for the citizens of Louisiana as the SU College of Agriculture is officially aligned with the SU Ag Center," said Dr. Adell Brown, Jr., Interim Chancellor of the SU Ag Center. "Resources can more effectively be directed to ensure that teaching, research and extension programs are being implemented to provide opportunities to our most underserved youth, families, and farmers. This alignment allows us to work as an agricultural family to shape new academic offerings, as we prepare our students for the 21st century work force needs in agriculture."

The Southern University System established the Agricultural, Research and Extension Center as its fifth campus in 2001. The merger will be effective on July 1, 2016.

The Southern University Urban Forestry Program organized a Louisiana Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Seminar at the SU Ag Center, April 6-7. Interim Chancellor Dr. Adell Brown, Jr., and Urban Forestry Program Leader Dr. Kamran Abdollahi were on hand to welcome workshop participants.

Topics of discussion for the morning session on day one included: *Food, Energy and Water: Natural Resources and Environment Perspective* presented by Dr. Ali Mohamed, Division Director of Environmental Systems, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA); *Priority Area in Forestry and Natural Resources, Research, Education and Extension* – Dr. Catalino Blanche, National Program Leader, Division of Environmental System, USDA; *Louisiana Arborist Certification Program and Arboriculture Extension* – Dr. Hallie Dozier, Professor, School of Renewable Natural Resources, LSU Ag Center; and *Baton Rouge Green: Urban and Community Forestry Projects* – Robert Seemann, Program Director, Baton Rouge.



Dr. Mohamed discusses energy, food and water



Dr. Chappell demonstrates tree health measurement

The afternoon session continued with discussions on: *Urban Forest Ecosystem Analysis for Scotlandville, Louisiana* by Dr. Zhu Hua Ning, Professor and Project Director, Urban Forestry Program; *Live Oak Tree Preservation, Risk Assessment, and Management Practices* – Dr. Fred Fellner, Director, Landscape Services, LSU; *Urban Soil Erosion: A Case Study of Scott's Bluff, Scotlandville* – Dr. Yemane Ghebreyessus, Professor and Project Director, Urban Forestry Program; *SU Urban Forestry Program: Utilizing Innovative Approaches in Education, Research and Outreach* – Dr. Kamran Abdollahi, Professor and Program Leader, SU Urban Forestry Program; *GIS and Remote Sensing Technologies and Urban Forest Analysis in Louisiana* – Dr. Fulbert Mamnwamba, Professor and Project Director, Urban Forestry Program; and *Developing Urban Forest Wetland Management Research* by Dr.

Christopher Chappell, Assistant Professor, Urban Forestry Program, SU.

Activities on the second day consisted of hands-on demonstrations

including: Urban Forest Wood Waste Biomass-to-Fuel Conversion; Ground Penetrating Radar for Tree Root Assessment, Urban Ecology Studies; Eco-physiology Studies; GIS and Remote Sensing; and Citrus Tree Planting on SU Campus. Other activities were arranged by request.

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center held its 2016 Faculty & Staff Professional Development Training session culminating in a request for merging the College of Ag with the Ag Center during the April SU System Board Meeting.

The three-day training, which was held April 20-22, brought SU Ag Center employees from across the state together in A. O. Williams Hall to share progress reports, clientele needs and strategic plans for the year. Administrators, faculty and staff convened to review the state of the Center while planning strategic ways of moving forward. The professional development training was unique because the Southern University Board of Supervisors voted to merge the Southern University College of Agriculture with the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center during the board's April 22 meeting. The merger will go into effect on July 1, 2016.

During the opening session, the SU Ag Center's Interim Chancellor Dr. Adell Brown, Jr., and Dr. Gina E. Eubanks, Vice Chancellor for Extension brought greetings to employees. In their opening remarks, Dr. Brown addressed the future of the Ag Center and the College of Agriculture in view of anticipated budget cuts for the Louisiana Higher Education System.



Dr. Mellion-Patin makes faculty and staff senate presentation



Ms. Mack makes presentation on fiscal matters



Dr. Udoh presents on Federal Plan of Work

Concurrent Sessions consisted of: Youth and Family Exposition, Federal Plan of Work, Fiscal Concerns, and a Faculty and Staff Senate presentation.

Each year, the USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Action Plan Progress Report highlights the most significant contributions of research. The April 2016 REE Mission Area Newsletter highlighted the work done by the SU Ag Center to combat obesity in its neighborhood. North Baton Rouge is identified by the USDA as a food desert, which means there is limited access to fresh produce. Food deserts are plagued with obesity and related health issues. The SU Ag Center reacted with an extension-based initiative by applying and receiving funding through a USDA Capacity Building Grant entitled, "Eradicating Food Deserts through the Development of School Gardens."



With this funding, a training series dubbed "[Plant it-Grow it, Try it-Like it.](#)" was introduced to teach families and children transferable skills to grow their own fresh produce. The series is the initiative's most successful program. To date, this program has reached three area schools and 500

students. Participants were taught a variety of nutrition-related technology, gardening, and physical fitness activities. Students are also given ownership of school garden spaces to ensure easy access to fresh vegetables.

Obesity and correlated health conditions have a \$100 billion yearly impact on the U.S. health care system, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

"The food desert project is a great opportunity for neighborhood schools near our campus. The students are excited about being outside, learning new skills and developing healthier eating habits," said Tiffany Franklin, PhD, project director.

The Research, Education, and Economics mission area of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has Federal leadership responsibility for advancing scientific knowledge related to agriculture through research, extension, and education.

SU AG CENTER PARTICIPATES IN LOUISIANA EARTH DAY

Louisiana's Earth Day celebration was held on April 17, 2016. Every year, the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center has been an integral part of the Earth Day celebration. This program provides a positive and free opportunity to interact with the citizens of Louisiana, share with them opportunities for success and showcase the hidden jewel that is the SU Ag Center. All events took place from noon until 6 p.m.

The SU Ag Center was located in booth #17 on North Boulevard between 5th Street and 6th Street.



Poland interacts with visitors about tobacco-free living



Mitchell shares information with booth visitors



Goita shares health information with visitors

Faculty, staff and volunteers shared information on gardening, nutrition and tobacco-free living, and gave away prizes including SU Ag Center paraphernalia during this event.

Southern University Ag Center representatives included Erica Williams-Mitchell, Research Associate, Frankie Poland, Communities of Color Network Coordinator, Mila Berhane, Senior Research Associate, and Mfamara Goita, Research Associate. Antoine Mitchell served as a volunteer and photographer.

Earth Day is an annual national event and its website is located at www.laearthday.org.

Southern University Baton Rouge Urban Forestry major, Joshua Simon, won first place at the National Society for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Undergraduate Written Essay Contest. Simon, a junior from Morganza, La., attended the National MANRRS 31st Annual Career Fair and Training Conference in Jacksonville, Fla. from March 30 - April 2, 2016.

The MANRRS Conference provides a forum for student members to showcase their talents and abilities through their participation in contests. Students can compete against top-tier universities and colleges from across the U.S. in a total of 10 contests that range from Undergraduate and Graduate Oral and Poster Research, Research Discussion, and Written Essay to a Business Plan Pitch Competition.

Simon placed first out of 60 contestants, with his essay titled, "Growing the Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders."

"I was thrilled, almost in disbelief when I was named as the first place winner of the national written essay contest," said Simon.



"When competing against larger institutions, Southern University is often overlooked as a competitor, but they were shown different in this competition. I truly enjoyed winning first place and I am looking forward to next year to hopefully win first in another competition. I am proud to be an Urban Forestry student at Southern U," he add.

MANRRS is a national student organizations that "promotes academic and professional advancement by empowering minorities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences."

The organization has more than 50 chapters at universities throughout the country that include Louisiana State, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Clemson, Florida A&M, Auburn, Alcorn State, The Ohio State, Michigan State, Purdue and Prairie View A&M University.

Southern University Ag Center faculty and staff members Zanetta Augustine; Drs. Renita Marshall, Janana Snowden and Christopher Chappell, along with USDA Liaison Alice Johnson, serve as MANRRS advisors for students on the Southern University campus.

For additional information about the Southern University Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences chapter, contact Zanetta Augustine at 225.771.2242. For information on the MANRRS organization, visit manrrs.org.

On April 15-17, 2016, students participating in the “JAGS in AG” project traveled to Pensacola, Florida for an agriculture experiential learning tour.

The students visited Clear Creek Farm in Milton, Florida where they had the opportunity to learn hands-on agriculture innovation,

sustainable practices and community involvement. Through the use of innovative container, raised bed, water culture, active and passive hydroponics, and high tunnel gardening, the farm owners are able to provide for their needs. They also sell fresh natural food, grown without using pesticides and insecticides to local restaurants year round. The students were introduced to feral swine to get an understanding of how they impact farmers and ranchers.

The program participants visited the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. The UF/IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center (WFREC) is the University of Florida campus in Milton and research facility in Jay. They comprise a part of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) which is a federal-state-county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences, and enhancing and sustaining the quality of human life by making that information accessible.



Students listening to Dr. Wood, Research Center Director, University of Florida's Jay Research Facility



Students sampling organic strawberries and spinach from Clear Creek Farm

Their mission is to create and extend knowledge in agriculture and natural resources through teaching, research, and extension to improve the quality of life. The Jay Research Facility creates knowledge for distribution through UF/IFAS Extension efforts. Here the students had a chance to visit research plots and extension programming. Students also had the opportunity to learn about graduate programs available to them at the University of Florida.

JAGS in AG provides experiential learning activities for college students in an attempt to expose them to careers in Food and Agricultural Sciences. The project trains students in research, experimentation methods, and outreach using current and relevant research from a “community based” and “campus based” approach.

“Through this process we will achieve our principal goal in helping build leaders and productive citizens over the next five to ten years, fulfilling the need of minorities in Food and Agricultural Sciences,” said Renita Wood-Marshall, DVM, Project Director.

“This was an excellent opportunity for students to understand the value of agriculture in their daily lives and experience the magnitude of the agriculture industry,” Dr. Marshall added.

Dr. Kenyetta Nelson-Smith serves as Co-Project Director and Dr. Marlin Ford, Program Mentor for the project.

Seven teens from the Outstanding Mature Girlz (OMG) Club met with some of Louisiana Legislators on March 29, 2016 for Legislative Awareness Day (LAD) at the Louisiana State Capitol.

In the last two years HIV/AIDS have doubled amongst teens in Louisiana.

According to the June 30, 2015

Louisiana HIV, AIDS and Early

Syphilis Surveillance Quarterly Report, 25% of all new HIV diagnoses in Louisiana during 2014 occurred among persons 13-24 years old. In the first half of 2015, the report stated that 44% of all early syphilis diagnoses in Louisiana occurred among persons between the ages of 13 and 24. While those numbers are increasing, many law makers wholeheartedly agreed with the young ladies that implementing Sex Ed in public schools may need to be revisited.

OMG Club members Deanna and Teanna Lee met with State Representative Patricia Smith to learn more about House Bill 369 that would mandate sex education in public schools. However, the bill was killed during the 2015 House Education Committee meeting with three representatives voting in favor of the bill, and ten opposing it. "We have to do a little more research, there's a survey youth can take called Youth Risk Assessment.



Young people are being educated with the wrong information about sex from their peers, and we have to be sure they are getting the right information," said Rep. Smith.



The young ladies did not stop there, they also met and spoke with newly elected State Representative Robby Carter, (who succeeded Governor John Bel Edwards) and State Senator Rick Ward III for the

first time. Both young ladies asked very tough questions and listened to the representatives' views on this sensitive subject matter. Senator Ward agreed to schedule a meeting in St. Helena Parish with school administrators and youth to discuss their concerns, and find solutions to put an end to this growing HIV/AIDS, Syphilis epidemic amongst youth in Louisiana.

"Before I joined the OMG Club I did not realize HIV and AIDS were two different things," said Deanna Lee.

During their brief meeting with State Representative Edward 'Ted' James, both young ladies reemphasized how important it was to learn information from people who were more knowledgeable than their peers. Rep. James reassured the OMG Club that he would definitely speak with his colleagues about this sensitive but very important matter.

Dr. Yadong Qi, Professor of Urban Forestry at the Southern University Ag Center was an invited speaker at the **First Asia-Pacific Urban Forestry Meeting**. The meeting was co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Urban Forestry Research Center of the State Forestry Administration of the People's Republic of China, in the host city of Zhuhai, P. R. China, April 6-8, 2016.



The speech given by Dr. Qi was entitled “Integrating Education and Research in Urban Forestry – A Higher Education Perspective in the USA”, in which she emphasized the importance of integrating urban forestry research into urban forestry education to provide students and future urban forestry professionals with experiential learning opportunities. The presentation was well

PUBLICATION:

Dr. Yadong Qi, Professor of Urban Forestry and Natural Resources co-authored a publication entitled "Cellulose nanofibers reinforced sodium alginate-polyvinyl alcohol hydrogels: Core-shell structure formation and property characterization" in the April issue of *Carbohydrate Polymers*, **147(20):155-164**. Please follow the link to read the article at [doi:10.1016/j.carbpol.2016.04.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.carbpol.2016.04.005).

received, and generated lively discussions among the participants. The meeting was attended by over 200 participants from 17 Asian countries, Europe and North America, representing around 60 government institutions, NGOs, universities, international organizations and professional associations. In addition to the presentation, Dr. Qi co-chaired a working group session on urban forests and cultural heritage and participated in the meeting’s round-table discussion.

“It was a rewarding experience and an honor to be invited to this meeting, which was a great international platform to discuss urban forestry research and to promote urban forestry education,” said Dr. Qi.

The publication is a product of the collaborative effort in applied nanotechnology between SU Ag Center’s Dr. Yadong Qi and LSU AgCenter’s Dr. Qinglin Wu, professor in forest product. The resulting knowledge is instrumental for the future research initiatives to develop environmentally friendly and multi-functional hydrogels and explore their application in agriculture and forestry.



Dr. Fatemah Malekian, Professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences, has recently been selected as a 2016 Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Fellow. Each year IFT strives to honor those members who have made outstanding contributions to advance the science of food

and its application in the global food system as well as demonstrating a commitment to the IFT community and our future. She is recognized for her lasting impact on the profession and future generations in helping to ensure a safe, nutritious, and sustainable global food supply. The recognition ceremony will take place at IFT16 to celebrate with her at the Fellows Recognition Forum and the Awards Celebration in July.



Renita W. Marshall, DVM/Associate Professor, Animal Science, was invited and has accepted the invitation to serve as an Eminent Editor in the *Open Access Journal of Veterinary Science & Research*, a multidisciplinary journal. The scope of this journal includes animal

nutrition, veterinary science physiology, veterinary medicine and behavior; diagnosis, treatment and prevention among animal diseases, animal pathology & immunology, animal reproduction and assisted technologies, animal vaccine, animal viruses, and research in veterinary science. The journal aspires to provide a global platform to scientists and researchers worldwide to submit their work in the form of research papers, review articles, case reports, short communication, mini reviews and editorials in all aspects of animal, veterinary sciences.

Editor Responsibilities:

- Editors should contribute to Journal development and management through generous relationship with other board members.
- Editors should ensure a proficient peer review process under eminent reviewers and they should be careful to maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

- Editors should ensure the protection of individual data and maintain confidentiality and are responsible for assuring the integrity in the published work.
- Editors can review the submitted manuscripts at their feasible time only and if time does not allow for reviewing the manuscript, editors can suggest other reviewers.
- The ultimate decision regarding acceptance, modification and rejection of a manuscript rests only with the editor. He/She should cross check the content quality, writing style and construction, grammar, spellings, data presentation and organization prior to take the final decision.
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- Should ensure that the manuscript is neither plagiarized nor published elsewhere. If the paper found plagiarized or infringed, the Editor has the right to reject the article straight away.
- Should supervise and support the publisher in handling complaints and appeals, responding genuinely to ethical problems regarding publication of any duplicate or fraudulent work.

The website for the journal is located at <http://medwinpublishers.org/OAJVSR/index.php>

Mrs. Mila Berhane, Senior Research Associate, shared a fact sheet on growing a butterfly garden during the recent Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Night at McKinley High School. The presence of the SU Ag Center was well received by students and faculty. Approximately, 150 flyers and 50 milkweed plants were distributed. Mrs. Berhane received a certificate of appreciation from the school.

On April 17, Louisiana Earth Day, 300 fact sheets on saving the Monarch Butterfly were distributed to visitors to the SU Ag Center's booth. Additionally, the SU Ag Center hosted students from Park Ridge Elementary School in Baker, who also received the fact sheets on April 25, 2016.



Growing milkweed attracts butterflies



Mila sharing information with students at McKinley HS on STEM night

UPCOMING EVENT:

June 16-18: Family and Youth Expo at SU Ag Center in Baton Rouge. Contact Dr. Wanda Burke at 225-771-5184.