

THE chancellor's REPORT

JULY 2019



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Dr. Kamran
Abdollahi
selected as the next
State Chair for the
Louisiana Society of
American Foresters



Dr. Kamran Abdollahi, Professor and Program Leader for Urban Forestry and Natural Resources in the Southern University College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences and the

Agricultural Research and Extension Center, has been selected as the next State Chair for the Louisiana Society of American Foresters (SAF). Last year, Dr. Abdollahi received the prestigious award by the SAF and was inducted into the Forestry Hall of Fame as a National Fellow.

The SAF is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. The mission of SAF is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; establish professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

The Society of American Foresters accredits 101 programs of study at 48 universities to offer specialized forestry education to their students. In addition, 26 programs of study at 25 institutions are recognized by SAF to offer two-year associates' degrees.

SU Ag Center & College of Ag
teaches youth agriculture
during S.U. Lab

S.W.A.G.
Summer Enrichment Camp

Youth in kindergarten through 6th grade learned the importance of Agriculture during the Southern University Lab School's Science, Writing, and Agriculture (SWAG) Summer Enrichment Program.

Faculty and staff from the Southern University Ag Center and College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences assisted with the development and implementation of the program, which was held June 3-28, 2019.

During the camp youth learned about irrigation, were able to see, touch and hold animals on Animal Science Day and make their own leaf collections.

Special thanks to Dr. Renita W. Marshall, Dr. Harold Mellieon, Dr. Yemane Ghebreyessus, Dr. Devaiah Kambiranda, Dr. Marlin Ford, Dr. Christopher Chappell, Mrs. Mila Berhane, Ms. Stephanie Elwood, and Ms. Keandrys Dalton for making the camp a success.





Dr. Renita Marshall and Student Kendrys Dalton participate in Pre-MAPP Workshop

Dr. Renita Marshall and Keandrys Dalton, a Senior Animal Science Major, attended the SHIP to SHORE 2019 Pre-Mobilizing for Action through Planning & Partnerships (MAPP) Workshop in Laplace, LA on June 20, 2019. The workshop was sponsored by Region 3 of the Louisiana Office of Public Health.

In this fast-paced training, participants experienced key elements of a local MAPP process. MAPP is intended for adaptation into various business, civic, and social sectors that influence our local culture of health.

The workshop was designed to benefit community influencers who interact with employees, clients, students, patients, volunteers, and citizen stakeholders. Attendees gained skills that engage local people in planning and action during the upcoming 2020-2025 state health improvement plan (SHIP).



The Southern University Ag Center and the Southern University Institute for One Health One Medicine are now Strategic Partners with the Louisiana Office of Public Health-Region 3.

SU AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

participate in **NATIONAL Veterinarians Conference**

Baton Rouge, La. – Students from Southern University’s College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences along with students from across the United States participated in the Inaugural National Association for Black Veterinarians (NABV) Conference June 7-8, 2019.

The conference themed, “The State of Blacks in Veterinary Medicine,” was held at the NOPSI Hotel in New Orleans, LA.



The mission of the national organization is to build a network of individuals and organizations that advocates for increasing the number of blacks in veterinary medicine at every level and profession.

The conference also provided sessions to support in-practice veterinarians with clinical businesses.

Dr. Renita Marshall, Director of the Southern University Institute for One Health One Medicine and Department Chair of Southern University’s Department of Agricultural Sciences is the 2019-2020 Charter President of the NABV.



SU Ag holds successful

BAYOU

summer program



Tayla was excited to explain the hands-on experience she gained during the program such as how to palpate a cow and figure out where the baby is inside the animal, draw blood from a goat out of its neck, and how to stop huff rot in a goat.

The Southern University College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences hosted 26 high school seniors and incoming college freshman for three weeks during the college's annual Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunities Unlimited (BAYOU) Program.

The program provides an opportunity for students to gain first-hand knowledge about career opportunities in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, Business or the natural sciences.

The students also participate in educational field trips during the program. One of those field trips was to the De Soto National Forest in Wiggins, MS, where the students were introduced to conservation efforts, wildfire work, and protection of endangered species. Calvin Adams, Felton

DeRouen and Drs. Harold Mellieon, Jr., Kamran Abdollahi, and Chris Chappell accompanied the students on the trip.

During the program's closing ceremony on June 21, every student presented their summer experience from the respective academic areas of Apparel Merchandising and Textiles, Agriculture Economics, Animal Science and Pre-Vet Medicine, Child Development, Human Nutrition and Food, Plant and Soil Sciences and Urban Forestry.

"I didn't know what to expect from the program in the beginning, but when I moved into the dorm and met my suit mates, it felt like a home away from home," said Tayla Williams, a BAYOU participant from New Orleans, LA and an incoming freshman at Southern University. "I really enjoyed visiting the different departments in the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences and I was glad that I was able to clarify exactly what I want to do in the Department of Animal Sciences," she added.

To qualify for the BAYOU program, students had to have a minimum grade point average of 2.5 and complete 11th grade. The students live in the dormitories on the Southern University Baton Rouge campus and are permitted to go home on the weekends.

The 2019 BAYOU coordinators were Allison Johnson, the United States Department of Agriculture's 1890 Program Liaison; Harold Mellieon, Jr., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Agricultural Science and Program Leader of Animal Science, and Tiffany Wilkerson-Franklin, Ph.D., Associate Youth Specialist at the SU Ag Center.

Sponsors for this year's program included the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Forest Service (FS) the Louisiana Chapter of Professional Black NRCS Employees, LA STEAM, and Southern University's TrueBlue.

For additional information about the BAYOU Program, visit <https://bit.ly/2RmLdQo>.





Urban Forestry Students receive scholarships from the Louisiana Forestry Foundation

The following College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Science students were awarded scholarships from the Louisiana Forestry Foundation: Tess Brown, Ke'Shae Brumfield, Kyla Bryant, Lajarious, Terrel Lewis, Nicholaus Pryor, Rodney Purdy, Asija Rice, and Tywin Tate.



Six SU College of Ag Students and Alumni accepted into Purdue University's Summer Scholars Program

Five Southern University students majoring in the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences and an alumna have been accepted into the Mentoring at Purdue Summer Scholars Program.

The program, which began in 2013, has a mission of increasing the number of women and underrepresented minorities pursuing post-secondary STEM-based agricultural and life science degrees in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University.

During the program, students will be able to visit the graduate departments in the College of Agriculture, engage with future faculty mentors and students, and explore research opportunities.

The program is open to college sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are interested in pursuing a master's or doctoral level degree in Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Agricultural Economics, Agronomy, Animal Sciences, Biochemistry, Botany and Plant Pathology, Ecological Sciences and Engineering (ESE), Entomology, Food Science, Forestry and Natural Resources, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Natural Resources Environmental Science (NRES), the Purdue University Interdisciplinary Life Science Ph.D. (PULSe), and Youth Development and Agricultural Education.

The scholars are Abigail Manual, an Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine; Amin Washington, an Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine; De'Shonna Jones, an Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine; Jasmine Fontenot, an Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine; Kaia South, an Agricultural Sciences major with a concentration in Animal Science, and Agricultural Sciences alumna Jennifer Brown, which is currently attending Alcorn State University pursuing a Master's in Animal Science.

Shonna Smith, a Biochemistry major at Southern University, was also accepted into the program. This is the largest number of students from one institution that have been accepted into the program this year.

Dr. Andra Johnson serves as a Panelist for

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**



Dr. Andra Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Research and Technology Development at the SU Ag Center, participated in a panel discussion along with Drs. Deacue Fields, who is a graduate of the SU College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences and Dean of Dale Bumper College's Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas, and Bill Richardson, the Vice President for Agriculture and Dean of the College of Agriculture at Louisiana State University, at

the 2019 National Agricultural Alumni & Development Association (NAADA) Conference held in Baton Rouge, La. on June 13, 2019.

The panelists discussed strategies and ideas for diversifying revenue streams and keeping the land-grant mission relevant in the midst of budget cuts, enrollment challenges, and stakeholder needs.

NAADA's mission is to provide education, support, and recognition for professionals and volunteers dedicated to expanding resources for advancing agriculture and related disciplines through land-grant and other colleges of agricultural sciences and partner programs.





9 Marksville Residents Receive Urban Agriculture Certifications

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center held a Sustainable Urban Agriculture Certification Program in Marksville, LA at the St. John Community Baptist Church from May 7 – June 4, 2019.

The program taught Participants how to use sustainable agricultural practices in an urban environment with hands-on experience. Topics covered during the series included: Permaculture and the Environment; Water Harvesting, Irrigation and Composting; Small Scale Agriculture; Urban Animal Husbandry with Poultry; Bees and Worms; Vertical Farming, Hydroponics, and Aquaponics; Maximizing the Use of Land Resources and Infrastructure; Community and School-Based Gardening; Communicating with the Public and Being Accountable; Marketing; Working with City Government within City Ordinances; Construction Techniques for Hoop Houses and Raised Beds; Organic and Sustainable Production and Combatting Diseases and Man-Made Threats.

The participants received certificates of completion on the last night of the course. Marlin Ford, Ph.D. is the Program's Leader/ Instructor and William Augustine is the Project Coordinator. For additional information about the SU Ag Center's Sustainable Urban Agriculture Certification Program or to schedule a training in your area, email marlin_ford@suagcenter.com or call 225-771-5164.

De'Shoin York to present at National USDA \ NIFA Conference



Dr. De'Shoin A. York, Associate Specialist of Nutrition, Health, and Wellness at the SU Ag Center, will present along with Dr. Helen Chipman, the National Program Leader of Food and Nutrition Education at the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), at the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior Conference. The presentation, entitled "From Roots to Branches: Growth of National Nutrition Education over 50 years" will be given on July 30 during the conference in Orlando, FL.

SU Ag Center's Mobile Technology Education Center Visits New Orleans area



The Southern University Ag Center's Mobile Technology Education Center (M-TEC) participated in a Health Fair hosted by the churches in the 5th District of the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA on June 8. The event was held in the parking lot of the New Life Church on 5918 Babylon St. in New Orleans, La. The 45-foot mobile classroom is retrofitted to facilitate the Ag Center's four certification programs in the areas of: Small Business Development; Small Ruminant

Production; Food Safety and Sustainable Urban Agriculture.

William Augustine, the certification program's project coordinator and Eual Hall, Interim Director/ Business Development Specialist of the Center for Rural and Small Business Development at the SU Ag Center, provided individuals with a tour of the mobile unit and information on the Ag Center's certification programs. Individuals who visited the mobile unit were excited to hear about the free certification programs that can be held in their areas.

For additional information about the SU Ag Center's M-TEC or to schedule a certification program in your area, contact William Augustine at 225-771-2561 or email him at william_augustine@suagcenter.com.



Dr. Kit Chin, a professor for the SU Ag Center and Agricultural Sciences Department in the College of Ag, served as a proposal panel reviewer for the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Beginning Farmer And Rancher Development. The panel convened June 17-21, 2019 in Washington, D.C.

Dr. De'Shoin A. York will be participating as a panel reviewer for the USDA NIFA's Community Food Program Request for Proposals (RFP). The Panel will convene in Washington, D.C. July 22 – 26, 2019..

SU Ag Center's Produce Safety Program holds a Farm Produce Safety Assessment

Staff members of the Southern University Ag Center's Produce Safety Program led a Farm Produce Safety Assessment at Warner Hall's vegetable farm in Greensburg, LA on Wednesday, June 19, 2019.

The program focuses on reducing the likelihood of foodborne illnesses caused by contamination of produce by human pathogens occurring at the farm level. Mr. Hall, who has attended two produce safety trainings, has a number of practices in place to reduce the risk of contamination on his farm. For instance, those working in the field wash their hands before harvesting produce. Vegetable bins are also washed and sanitized daily.

Six farmers in addition to Mr. Hall were present. There was a discussion on the subjects of proper handwashing, use of food-grade sanitizers, and traceability of vegetables sold. The group went out to the field and observed produce in varying stages of growth. Mr. Hall told the group about his crops and pointed out the electric fence wires that kept out unwanted wildlife. The animals not only eat the produce, but they also carry human pathogens.

Produce Safety team members Emily King, L'Asia George and Chelsea Triche participated in the event. Marty Pousson and Kelly Hughes from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and

Forestry (LDAF) contributed to the assessment as well. Fatemeh Malekian is the project director for the SU Ag Center's Produce Safety Program.

SU Ag Center holds produce safety and GAP trainings

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center is participating in a \$3.6 million grant awarded to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to assist produce growers in improving their safety practices ahead of the implementation of a new federal rule under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

The Southern University and LSU Ag Centers have been collaborators on the grant, with the Southern University Ag Center receiving about \$500,536.

"The funds have been helping to educate farmers, especially small and underserved produce growers, about the Produce Safety Rule that is part of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)," said Fatemeh Malekian, Project Director.

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center has been collaborating with other entities in conducting farm inventory (especially small farmers), On Farm Readiness Review (OFRR), evaluating existing statutory and/or regulatory authority related to produce safety, conducting trainings and determining the changes to establish, operate and maintain a Produce Safety Program that is supportive of the requirements in the FDA's Produce Safety Regulation.

The Produce Safety Rule was finalized in November 2015 and sets standards for growing, harvesting, packing and storing fruits and vegetables. It addresses water quality, composting, farm personnel health and hygiene and equipment sanitation among other issues. Large farms must comply with the rule by January 2019. Smaller farms have more time to comply.

Several trainings have been conducted since 2016. Growers can learn how the new regulations will affect their farm and what steps they must take to get in compliance.

The Southern University Ag Center team has also received funding from the USDA in 2018 to provide training for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The two programs can assist the farmers to reduce the risk of microbial contamination of fruits and vegetables during production, harvest, and packaging. These trainings have been offered in a two-day event in Louisiana. Reducing foodborne illness will be most successful if all farmers who grow and sell fruits and vegetables learn basic produce safety.

On June 12-13, 2019, Fatemeh Malekian (Lead Trainer), Emily King, L'Asia George and Chelsea Triche conducted produce safety and Good Agricultural and Good Handling Practices (GAP and GHP) trainings, in collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry personnel, Allison Dumas, Marty Pousson and Audrey Carrier (state GAP auditor), and Bahia Nightengale from the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance (CLEDA) in Alexandria. The farmers who attended these two trainings received a certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) for completing the produce safety training and will receive financial assistance for their GAP certification/audit if qualified.





Tevin HAMILTON

This article and photo appeared in The Forestry Source, News for forest resource professionals published by the Society of American Foresters in June 2019. The Future of SAF, Tevin Hamilton: Finding a Path in Forestry By Tevin Hamilton

The Forestry Source Editor's note: Continuing with our profiles of up-and-coming SAF members who will continue managing our nation's natural resources in the coming decades, this month we feature Tevin Hamilton. He is a graduate of Southern University and A&M College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in urban forestry. Since joining SAF in 2017, Hamilton has participated in several community-service projects that involve the rehabilitation of greenspaces within underdeveloped communities and instructing the youth of the benefit of the environmental services. He was selected as an SAF Diversity Scholar in 2018 (for information on the scholarship, see tinyurl.com/yy7g4rvj).

Hamilton currently works on San Bernardino National Forest. Starting this fall, he will attend Yale University to earn a Master of Environmental Management.

In his own words, Hamilton describes his path toward a career in forestry.

How he became interested in forestry

Originally, I started in forestry for the wrong reasons. I was introduced to forestry in the summer of 2013 just before I began my freshman year of college. As a young adolescent from St. Louis learning about forestry for the first time, all I heard was how much money I could make within the profession. I didn't have a real passion for forestry or truly understand what it was. I was lost and didn't know my purpose. I continually prayed in search of a path for my career and life. I

had to ask myself some important questions: why did I want to continue with forestry and natural resources in the first place; why does the environment matter; and why is it so important to properly manage it? I knew I had to figure out what it is I truly wanted.

My first internship answered those questions. Researching urban wetlands in Louisiana gave me an opportunity to learn how the environment is directly affected by human activity, and my perspective on the environment drastically changed. Wetland loss is a critical concern because wetlands are threatened ecosystems due to urban development and land-use change. I wanted to look at how further wetland loss can be mitigated. I knew I wanted to continue my education and profession within forestry to learn more of the issues facing the environment.

The summer after my junior year in college was my first time working with the US Forest Service. After attending a MANRRS conference, I became a Forest Service Pathways student. The Pathways program offers students internships that eventually lead to jobs after graduation. My first internship with the agency was in the state of Tennessee, where I was exposed to different areas of forestry, such as soil conservation and water preservation. I mainly worked on inventories, but I also learned how employees interact with the people who use

and live on the land.

[MANRRS is a nonprofit whose mission is to “promote academic and professional advancement by empowering minorities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences.”]

How service projects and research supplemented his education

Since joining SAF, I’ve participated in several community-service projects that involve the rehabilitation of greenspaces within older communities and teaching youth about the benefits of natural resources. I worked with a nonprofit organization called Baton Rouge Green that works to maintain the trees and green spaces in the city in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I assisted with conducting an inventory of street trees that were under the care of the city and state. When inventorying, I used my mensuration skills to measure the DBH, height, and identify the species of the trees to determine the ecological benefit of each tree. I also participated in numerous tree plantings at local elementary schools and underdeveloped communities to aesthetically enhance these areas and increase environmental benefits. I believe volunteering is an important role of SAF to help the environment and various communities.

While working for the Forest Service as an undergraduate, I was privileged to work on a research project that examined the concentration of pollutants in urban soils in Atlanta, Georgia. The two locations included a middle class, gentrified, predominantly white neighborhood and a lower class, predominantly black neighborhood. These areas were selected to determine if race and social class affect how a community is environmentally managed. Through this research, we concluded that both locations had high levels of hazardous metals due to ineffective regulations. Having an active role in these research projects inspired my passion for research, and I want to continue working toward preserving the limited land on the planet.

The hidden challenges of attending college

During my time in academia, I faced situations that challenged my commitment to my education. I was accumulating a significant amount of debt from student loans, which resulted in so much

stress that I considered dropping out of school. I was losing focus and didn’t really know what I wanted anymore, but then the unlikely happened. I was nominated for a scholarship

that I didn’t even apply for. I was selected to become a USDA 1890 scholar, which is funded in full by the Forest Service. The scholarship includes full tuition, full housing coverage, and an internship each summer with the Forest Service. Having this opportunity was amazing. During this time of my life, I realized how truly blessed I am, because it’s as if overnight all the answers came at once. After deep reflection, I realized that the path I was on was the right one.

What he’s learned from forestry coursework

While studying urban forestry, I learned the importance of proper natural-resource management and the benefits it provides for the environment and the people who utilize the resources. I believe the preservation and management of natural resources are vital to the sustainability of our planet, so I’m interested in researching different ways to effectively manage these resources.

Starting this fall, I will attend Yale University to obtain a Master of Environmental Management. I want to work toward finding solutions to some of the world’s essential problems, such as water conservation and land sustainability. Through my experience, I learned that having a bachelor’s degree is helpful, but there are more opportunities for advancement for those with advanced degrees.

Attending graduate school will provide me the opportunity to fully immerse myself in the subject matter, work on advanced projects and research, and become informed of the latest advancements in the natural resource field. I hope to gain mentorship from experienced professionals who can provide me career insight and guide my future endeavors. There is a crucial need for students or individuals of diverse backgrounds in the natural resource and environmental science disciplines, because diversity and inclusion are fundamental to effectively managing our natural resources for the benefit of all people.

To connect with Tevin Hamilton, he can be reached at tevindyrell@yahoo.com.

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