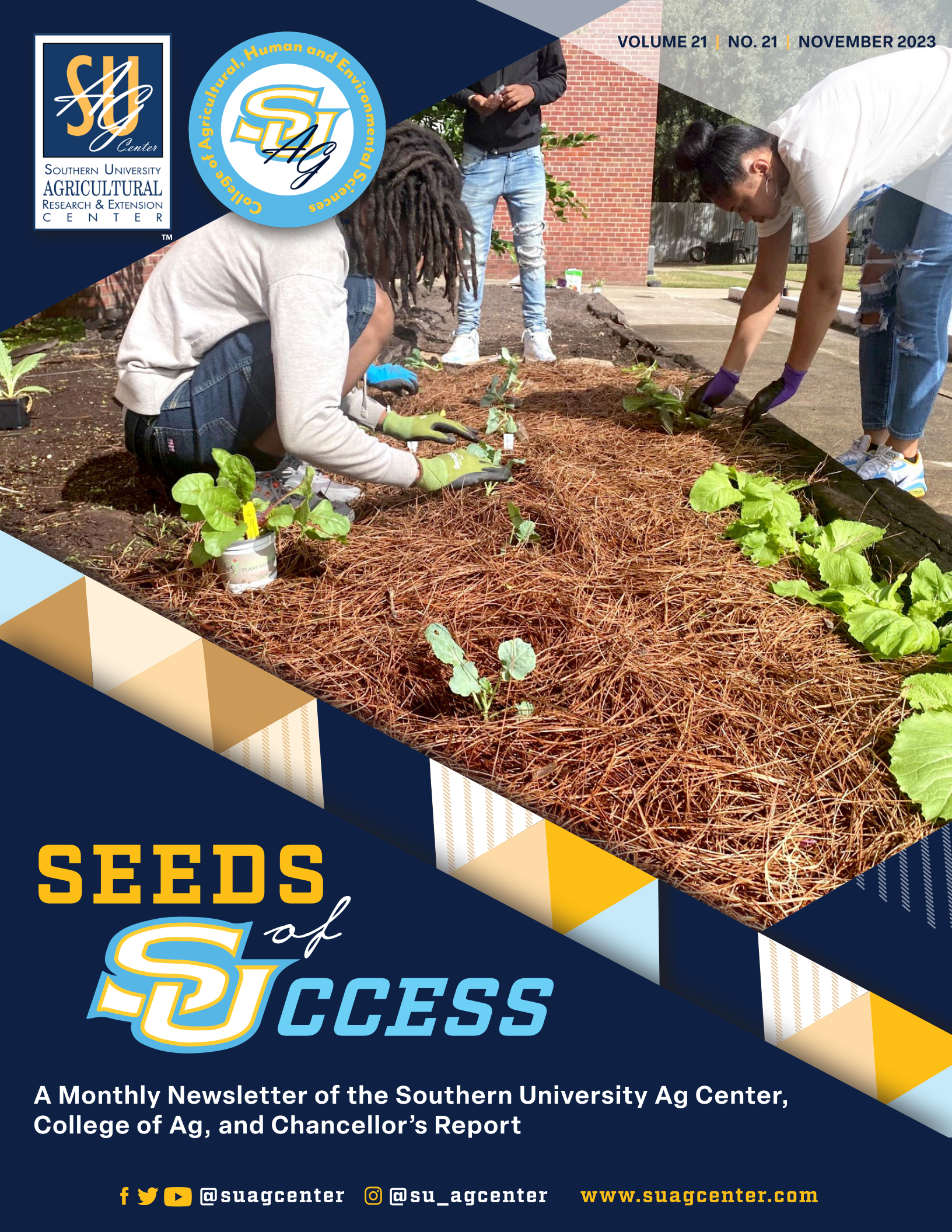




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# SEEDS *of* SUCCESS

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



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**SU Ag Center Commemorates the  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual of the Louisiana Medical  
Marijuana Program With a Charity Benefit**

The Southern University Ag Center, Ilera Holistic Healthcare, and the Southern University System Foundation partnered to host a charity benefit honoring former Governor Kathleen Blanco, Senator Fred Mills, and Representative Ted James on October 5, 2023, at The Old Governor's Mansion.

The benefit raised over \$50,000 to establish a foundation to offer financial assistance to Louisiana's patients facing financial barriers in accessing the medical marijuana program.

"The Southern University Ag Center continues to position itself at the forefront of innovation. From being the first HBCU to occupy a space for medical cannabis research to exceeding our product goals, we are ecstatic to celebrate five purposeful years of this work," said Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Chancellor-Dean of the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Ag. "We are even more excited about what the future holds as it relates to transforming the quality of life for chronically ill patients," he added.

Governor Blanco, Senator Mills, and Representative James all played pivotal roles in advancing medical marijuana legislation.

"My involvement with the Medical Marijuana program is one of my highest honors as a legislator," expressed Rep. Ted James. "We have directly changed lives for our neighbors. As a graduate of Southern University, it was important to me that my alma mater play an important part in saving lives...and we have. I'm proud to have played a part," added James.

Louisiana's Medical Marijuana Program has positively impacted over 70,000 patients and their families, providing relief in areas such as chronic pain, anxiety, cancer, and more.

For additional information on the charity benefit or to make a donation towards the establishment of the foundation, visit <https://foundation.sus.edu/the-blanco-foundation-benefit/>.



# EPA Announces Nearly \$800K to Southern University for Pollution Prevention Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the Southern University Ag Center was selected for a nearly \$800,000 pollution prevention grant on October 19, 2023. Nationwide, 24 recipients were selected for \$16 million in grants through the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda. Southern University's grant will fund a project to reduce water pollution from industrial facilities.

"EPA values the partnership of Southern University in working to bring the benefits of pollution reduction to all communities, especially those like East Baton Rouge and New Orleans East that are historically overburdened and underinvested," said Regional Administrator, Dr. Earthea Nance. "The Southern University team designed a project that will leverage EPA programs like Safer Choice and help mitigate the air and water pollution that these communities experience."

"The Southern University Ag Center is excited to be the only Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to receive the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Pollution Prevention grant in the category of Environmental Justice in Communities," said Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Chancellor-Dean of the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Ag. "This grant will assist the Ag Center in ensuring that underinvested communities have access to clean water and air through educating manufacturers on solutions to reduce hazardous substances that are released in the waters of East Baton Rouge and New Orleans East."

"This is great news for Louisianians who have endured environmental injustice for far too long. All Americans – no matter where they live – deserve to breathe clean air, drink safe water, and live in a healthy environment," stated Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (LA-02). "That's why I worked so hard to craft the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and I am proud to see underserved communities access this critical funding and technical assistance to improve public health at the local level. As the member for Region 7 of the Regional Leadership Council, I will continue to work closely with the Biden-Harris Administration to ensure these transformative environmental protection policies and programs reach every American in every community in our region," added Congressman Carter.



The grant selectees included a diverse set of projects that will tackle pollution prevention at the community level. The Southern University Ag Center plans to partner with Louisiana State University and local community leaders to conduct workshops and onsite water quality assessments to find ways to reduce contaminated discharges to local aquifers, including the use of the EPA's Safer Choice program. Their work will be focused in East Baton Rouge and New Orleans East, two areas suffering from underinvestment. The project will also include outreach to local communities to identify and track pollution prevention strategies.

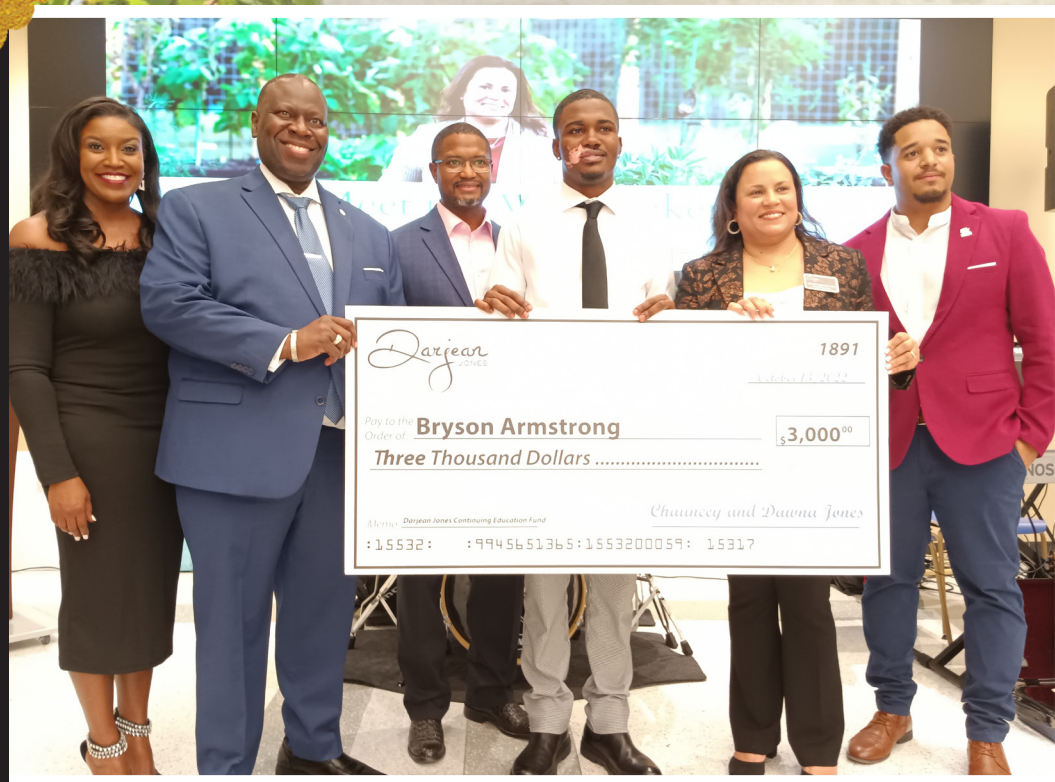
EPA's Pollution Prevention Grant Program advances President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which aims to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Ensuring greater availability and the use of safer and more sustainable products can reduce harmful chemical exposures and their human health and the environmental impacts in disadvantaged communities and create a more sustainable and accessible marketplace. These efforts will continue to benefit businesses and communities across the nation by capturing what works and what can be adjusted in other communities. Recipients will share successful practices that are new or not widely known, as well as lessons learned so that future businesses and communities can continue to innovate.



# VINO *on the* BLUFF

## 2023



## 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL VINO ON THE BLUFF *Scholarship Wine Tasting* Raises More Than \$25,000

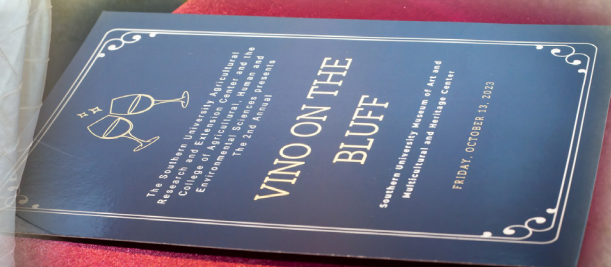
The Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) held the 2nd Annual Vino on the Bluff Wine Tasting Fundraiser on Oct. 13, 2023, at the Southern University Cultural and Heritage Center, on the Southern University campus.

The fundraiser, which included a silent auction, farm-to-table inspired food, and live entertainment, raised over \$25,000 that will be used for the Darjean Jones Wines Continuing Education Scholarship Fund for students enrolled in CAHES.

Bryson Armstrong, a sophomore Animal Science major, was named as the 2023 recipient of the Darjean Jones Wines Continuing Education Scholarship during the event. In addition to the \$3,000 scholarship, he will also receive a mentorship with CAHES alumni and Darjean Jones owners Chauncey and Dawna Jones. Armstrong is pursuing a career in Agriculture because of his exposure as a child and the Agricultural Science courses he took while in high school. He is also the former recipient of the Dr. George E. Robinson Endowed Scholarship.

This year's Vino on the Bluff partners included the McBride Sisters Wine Company, Darjean Jones Wines, and Red Reed Vodka.

For additional information on the Vino on the Bluff or to make a donation to the Darjean Jones Wines Continuing Education Scholarship fund, contact Robert Easley, Jr. at [robert\\_easley@suagcenter.com](mailto:robert_easley@suagcenter.com).





# JAGGIE PRIDE

## SU AG WEEK 2023

### SU Ag Center and College of Ag Holds Successful Ag Week

On Sept. 11-16, 2023, the Southern University Ag Center and College of Ag partnered with SU Athletics to host Ag Week for the community and agriculture students leading up to the Ag game on Sept. 16, 2023..

The week of events kicked off on Monday with **Fireside Chats: Recharging Your Mind, Reconnecting with Nature**. The mental health session, led by SU Ag Assistant Specialist for Mental Health, Ashlyn Harrison, allowed students to sit in The Educational Forest and participate in a series of activities including self-reflection, interactive art therapy, imagery, and guided meditation all while reconnecting with nature.

On Tuesday, at the **Connecting Green Synergies: Capacity Building Day**, students majoring in Agriculture, more specifically Agricultural Sciences and Urban Forestry majors, were given information by CN Utility Consultants and Wright Tree Service employees on their companies and how to properly present themselves as quality candidates when applying to green careers.

A **Community Garden Giveaway** was held on Wednesday which included sweet potatoes, tomatoes, okra, homemade



jam, honey, and ground meat fresh from the Southern University Meat Lab. Students also participated in the **Student Hometown Cuisine Cookoff**. Given one hour, students prepared a dish that was special and unique to their region that was judged based on taste, creativity, presentation, and adherence to the hometown theme. Each criterion was given a certain weightage, with taste having the highest weightage. Georgia and Alabama duo, Kentry Harbor and Arynne Jenkins won third place for their Spicy Honey Wings, Opelousas, Louisiana's, Brian Thomas won second place for his rendition of 'Black Pot', a dish consisting of rice and hen gravy, and lastly, Jaden Cheatham from Donaldsonville, Louisiana took the first-place prize for his spicy Red Beans and Rice dish.

That evening, the Ag Center and the College of Ag was highlighted on the **Overtime with Athletic Director Coach Roman Banks** talk show at TJ Ribs. Information of our Center was given by Chancellor-Dean, Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, and Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement and External Relations, Dr. Katara Williams.

On Thursday, a **Brunch & Learn** was held featuring a panel consisting of Chancellor-Dean, Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Senior Advisor for Racial Equity to the Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. DeWayne Goldmon, and Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, Mr. Daniel Whitley. Students were given information on how they can properly prepare themselves during their collegiate careers to be successful when pursuing careers in agriculture.

**Jagie's Research Rampage: A Social Media Adventure**, highlighted some of the Ag Center's research projects including SUN Beef from the College of Agriculture, the groundbreaking Viticulture and Enology degree and research program in partnership with the McBride Sisters Collection and Darjean Jones Wines, and the SU Human Nutrition Department's partnership with Geauxkiro and Kroger throughout the day on our social media platforms.

At the **"Kick back and Chill": Ag Game Gear Giveaway** on Friday students made ice cream, received information on the programs available within the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences and received Ag Gear for the AG football game.

To close out AG week, the SU Ag Center and the College of Ag hosted a **Field to Fork Tailgate** which included food, cooking demonstrations by EBR and East Feliciana Parish Nutrition Educators, Chrishana Littlejohn-Thomas and Evan Egana, student presentations, and a live performance by Lil Nate. Ilera Holistic Healthcare also provided information on telemedicine during the tailgate. The Southern University Jaguars won at the AG game against the Alabama Bulldogs that evening.





# TEACHING



## SU Ag Center and the College of Ag Held 2023 Ag Career Cluster Activities

The Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) held several activities during its 2023 Ag Career Cluster beginning Oct. 9 – Oct. 14, 2023, on the Southern University campus.

Activities kicked off on Oct. 9 with the “Clearing the Smoke,” SU Cannabis Chronicles Brunch and Learn for SU students. The event focused on careers in the cannabis industry and provided students with information on the development of the CAHES’s minor in Cannabis Sciences in the Ag Sciences program.

Panelists for the event included Brandon DeBoer, Director of Cultivation; Ramon Richardson, Cultivation Manager; Jere Williams, Processing Manager; Pamela Wiltz, Marketing and Sales Director, and Theodoris Thyssen, Facilities and Construction, all with Ilera Holistic Healthcare.

The “Mind Your MANNRS Wear and Share Workshop,” was held on Oct. 10 and provided students in the CAHES with the knowledge and skills to present themselves professionally and create standout resumes for the Ag Career Expo (ACE).

Members of the Southern University Ag Center and College of Ag students participated in the Student

Health Center’s Annual Homecoming Health Fair on Oct. 11. The Ag Center’s staff and students provided attendees with information on nutrition programs offered by the SU Ag Center, mental health information, and information on the SU Ag Center’s partnership with the *All of Us* Research Program. The health fair also included health screenings and vaccinations for the students.

The “Ag Career Expo,” was held on Oct. 12 in the Seymour Gym. The event provided students with the opportunity to speak with more than 25 exhibitors during the career fair-style event. Key sponsors for the expo included Mosaic, Weyerhaeuser Company, USDA-Forest Service, Zen-Noh Grain Corporation, and Consolidated Grain and Barge.

Members of the SU Ag Center’s Cooperative Extension program participated in the “Health is Wealth Community Festival,” on Oct. 12. The Extension team gave out free breakfast rice samples as well as offered nutrition and physical activity tips to the campus community.

The College of Ag’s “Alumni and Industry Networking,” event was held on Oct. 13 on the lawn of Fisher Hall.

Activities concluded on Oct. 14 with members of the SU Ag Center and the CAHES participating in the 2023 SU Homecoming Parade, marking a remarkable presence with their eye-catching floats. This heartwarming event brought together students, faculty, staff, CAHES Alumni, and even prospective future jAguars. The “Industry Cluster Networking Brunch,” was also held on the lawn of Fisher Hall before the 2023 SU Homecoming Football Game.

For additional information about the week’s activities contact Dr. Harold Mellieon, Jr. at [harold\\_mellieon@subr.edu](mailto:harold_mellieon@subr.edu) or Robert Easley, Jr. at [robert\\_easley@suagcenter.com](mailto:robert_easley@suagcenter.com).





# TEACHING

## Southern University Child Development Lab Celebrates Homecoming: CUBS Edition



Students in the Southern University Child Development Lab kicked off Southern University's Homecoming Week on Monday, October 9, 2023, with 'FARMERS Day', the enthusiasm was palpable. Young learners, adorned as farmers, gardeners, and budding agricultural scientists, dove into the world of planting. They were guided by Alexis Motley, SU Dietetic Internship Director and Professor for CAHES. In a particularly innovative approach, SU Ag Center's Stephanie Elwood and Michael 'Terra' Polite introduced seed planting in newspaper pots, showcasing sustainable methods. Dr. Dana Pollard, an SU Ag Center Research Scientist, read to each class.

The festivities continued into Tuesday, aptly named 'CUBS in Green'. Southern University's Dietetic Interns took center stage, serving a delightful array of green fruits and vegetables. This green-themed snack was not just a treat for the taste buds but also a brilliant way to emphasize the importance of nutritious eating.

For additional information on the Southern University Child Development Lab, email Dr. Keisha Dandridge at [keisha\\_dandridge@subr.edu](mailto:keisha_dandridge@subr.edu).





## The SU Ag Center and the NMSDC Acres Program Have Announced a Partnership

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SU Ag Center or Southern University Ag Center) and the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) are partnering to enhance NMSDC's Acres: Cultivating Equity in Black Agriculture program.

As part of the partnership, the Southern University Ag Center will provide instructors and course material for the Acres 12-week learning curriculum focused on growing program participants' capacity to take on major national contracts with NMSDC corporate members.

Courses that will be provided to this year's cohort include:

- National Certification
- Agribusiness Planning
- Sustainability: People, Profit and Planet
- GAP certification (Good Agricultural Practice/Global Animal Partnership USDA - Worker Protection Standard)
- Global Food Safety Initiative Certification
- Sustainability and Environmental Footprint
- Access to Capital - Financial Prep, Business Credit, and Farm Financing
- What are My Options? Loans and Venture Capital
- Marketing, Branding, and Sharing Your Story
- Procurement Capability and Supplier Readiness

Upon completion of the courses, Acres farmers will receive a certification of completion from the Southern University Ag Center, in addition to further strategic business support from NMSDC. The Ag Center will also conduct participant assessments aimed at enhancing the learning content provided to future cohorts of the Acres program.

"This partnership will provide the farmers in the Acres program a more robust and effective learning

curriculum and lead to greater contracting opportunities for them as they look to scale their business and work with the leading corporations in the U.S. food supply chain," said NMSDC Senior Director of Strategic Alliances and Programs Jetheda Hernandez.

"Each and every participant will get immense amounts of knowledge from experts in their specialized field of study. This is invaluable to the participants' understanding of farming in the world today," said Southern University Ag Center's Associate Specialist for Small Farms Brian Phillips, Ph.D.

Acres: Cultivating Equity in Black Agriculture is a program developed through a partnership between NMSDC, Cargill, Walmart, and UNFI to advance agricultural supply chain access for Black farmers. This initiative is creating a pathway for emerging Black farmers to achieve parity in the agriculture industry with learning solutions, certification, lending, networking, and new contracts. It consists of two elements: a learning program and strategic business support. Learn more about the program at [nmsdc.org/acres-cultivating-equity-in-black-agriculture](https://nmsdc.org/acres-cultivating-equity-in-black-agriculture).

NMSDC was founded in 1972 and is the longest-operating business growth engine for the broadest group of systematically excluded communities of color (Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, and Native American), and their impact goes far beyond the supply chain. The council focuses on upward mobility for the emerging majority of Americans, an equal shot at participating in the American experiment of free-market capitalism and entrepreneurship. Our work is about correcting the unequal access to wealth-building opportunities.

## SARDI Holds Its Annual Fall Fest

The SU Ag Center's Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development Institute (S.A.R.D.I.) held its annual Fall Fest on Saturday, October 21, 2023 in Opelousas, La.

More than 150 community members attended the event which provided tips for fall gardening, information on small ruminant training, a greenhouse/gardening display, and activities and games for children.

SARDI is the satellite campus of the Southern University Ag Center housed in Opelousas, La. The Institute focuses on improving the socio-economic well-being of citizens in rural communities, within a ten-parish region of St. Landry, Acadia, Allen, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Evangeline, Lafayette, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin, and Vermillion Parishes.

For additional information about SARDI contact the Institute's director Antonio Harris at, [antonio\\_harris@suagcenter.com](mailto:antonio_harris@suagcenter.com).





# EXTENSION

Center

## SU Ag Center Held 1<sup>st</sup> JAGFresh Farmers Market on Oct. 19

The Southern University Ag Center held the first JAGFresh Farmers Market on Thursday, October 19, 2023. The market provided SU students, faculty, and the community with fresh eggs, beef, honey, hibiscus tea, fresh cut plants, fresh produce such as collard greens and radishes, and many more items from local farmers and producers.

Along with the market, the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program held a "Secure the Snap" session where Southern University students were provided with information on SNAP Benefits and how they can apply. The Southern University Ag Center's Mobile Technology Unit was also on-site allowing students access to computers to complete necessary steps.

"Most food has traveled an average of 1,500 miles around the state before it arrives at a grocery store. We've made it our mission to cut out the highway miles allowing our community fresher options closer to home," said Cornelius Jackson, Assistant Area Agent and event organizer.

Lowering greenhouse gas emissions, preserving valuable land, and endorsing sustainable practices that support the growing environment are all benefits to local shopping.

"Southern University is located in a food-desert



community so being able to provide these fresh options locally is vital," added Jackson.

The JAGFresh Market will be held on the following dates: November 9th, December 14th, and February 1st on the lawn of Fisher Hall from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.

The Farmers Market is sponsored by the Farmers Market Coalition and hosted in collaboration with the SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed Program and the 1890 Center Of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life (COENHWQL).

For additional information, to register as a vendor or to become a sponsor, contact Cornelius Jackson at [cornelius\\_jackson@suagcenter.com](mailto:cornelius_jackson@suagcenter.com).



## SU Ag Center Creates New Partnership With Empower 225

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center has established a new partnership with Empower 225. The mission of Empower 225 is to empower youth to reach their highest potential through education, life skills, career training, housing, and mentorship. It addresses poverty, violence, foster care, housing, and human trafficking for young adults in need. The staff supports these needs by providing classes for students to assist them in obtaining their high school equivalency (Hi-Set) diploma, life skills training, career preparedness, housing, and mentorship. The SU Ag Center will be incorporating Landscape Horticulture training to Empower 225 students through the USDA/NIFA Out the Mud: Connecting Youth Adults to Agricultural Opportunities through Experiential Learning grant.

SU Ag Center staff members Stephanie Elwood, Kiyana Kelly, and Terra Polite provide weekly programming at the Empower 225 campus. Students have created, planted, and maintained a 60 ft x 6 ft garden space on site. They have planted a fall garden with green onions, artichokes, collard greens, mustard greens, carrots, rosemary, and cauliflower. Students will attend and participate in 10 lessons to be able to receive a certificate of completion from the Southern University Ag Center's Out the Mud Program. Upon completion, students can add the certificate to their resume and utilize it when applying to landscape, lawn service, or plant nursery-related jobs.

For more information about the USDA/NIFA Out the Mud: Connecting Youth Adults to Agricultural Opportunities through Experiential Learning grant, contact Stephanie Elwood at [stephanie\\_elwood@suagcenter.com](mailto:stephanie_elwood@suagcenter.com).





# *Faculty & Staff* HIGHLIGHTS

## Kiyana Kelly Has Been Named Director of the Center of Excellence at the SU Ag Center

Kiyana Kelly has been appointed as the Director of the 1890 Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life (COE or COENHWQL) at the Southern University Ag Center.

The appointment was approved during the Southern University Board of Supervisors meeting on October 20, 2023.

Kelly has a wealth of experience in the field of nutrition, health, and wellness. She has served as the SU Ag Center's Associate Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences and Youth Development since 2019. During this time, she also implemented the COE's Sister's Together: Move More, Eat Better program.

As the Director, she will oversee the development and implementation of programming in disease prevention and wellness, healthy community food systems, health education, and physical activity through statewide initiatives and programs offered by the SU Ag Center and the College of Ag. Kelly will also provide leadership in the development and submission of new extramural grants and contracts to support COE initiatives as well as communicate COE's value by developing effective relationships and relevant program outcome information to public officials, legislators, the public, and other interested parties.

Kelly earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Education and Promotion with a concentration in Worksite and Community Health from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Master of Public Administration from Southern University and A & M College.

In May 2021, the SU Ag Center was named as one of four 1890 Centers of Excellence grant recipients to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to establish the COENHWQL. It addresses diet-related health disparities in African Americans by increasing the capacities of 1890 institutions through nutrition research, teaching, and extension.

For additional information on the 1890 Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life, visit <https://www.suagcenter.com/page/center-of-excellence>.

A professional headshot of Kiyana Kelly, a Black woman with long, straight black hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark navy blue blazer over a white collared shirt and a single-strand pearl necklace. The background is a neutral, light gray.

*Kiyana Kelly*



# COMMUNICATIONS



Tune into the Southern University Ag Center's latest Podcast which will recap the Louisiana Medical Marijuana Program's 5th anniversary on October 5, 2023, at The Old Governor's Mansion.

The Podcast will include interviews from the Southern University Ag Center and College of Ag Chancellor-Dean, Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Representative Ted James, and Southern University Board members Rani G. Whitfield, M.D., and Ann Smith, and Dr. Janana Snowden, Executive Director of the Southern Institute for Medicinal Plants.

Tune in to the monthly shows by visiting [www.suagcenter.com](http://www.suagcenter.com) and click on "Podcast."

## SU AG PODCAST

"Everyday we use some form of agriculture, from the time we wake up, until we go to bed. From clothing, gasoline, food, and bed linens — agriculture is all around us!"

Join us as we interview your Ag favorites, and bring you agriculture news.

Hosted by:  
Dexter "Dex" Newman



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