

The Observer

Express

Enlighten

Entertain

The official student newspaper of Southern University at New Orleans

Congratulations

Class of 2022

By Malery Louis - Editor -In- Chief - MS C.I.S. - Class of 2022

Congratulations to the Class of 2022. Through all of the trials and tribulations brought on by a global pandemic, Hurricane Ida, and a tornado **WE MADE IT TO THE END!!** A lot can be said about a



person who perseveres through hard times. As the world halted and transformed before our eyes, each of us dug deep and remained committed to accomplishing our goal. We mastered the art of versatility in just a short time. Forced into hybrid learning and alternative teaching methods, we did what some thought was impossible. We sacrificed time, energy, money, relationships, and ourselves to put on our cap and gown and cross that stage.

On May 7th, at 4:00pm our class will lead the return

back to the Lakefront Arena for our commencement ceremony. Graduation is where we are formally celebrated, so let the celebrations begin! As we transition from student to alumni, never forget the HBCU that groomed you. Carry SUNO with you as you embark on your career and life journey. Never forget you are a Knight, and SUNO is always your home. Take care of home and give back to SUNO what she has given to you. As it is often said, you can go anywhere from 6400 Press Drive. Fly high, thrive, and keep SUNO alive! **Congratulations Class of 2022 from The Observer.**

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HBCU Legacy Bowl
New Orleans vs. Carjackers



Our Logo Needs A Refresh!

The SUNO Observer's logo needs a refresh. Staff are encouraging local artist to join the contest and submit their version of a logo refresh.

Join the BEST!



For 2022 -2023

The SUNO Observer wants you! We are always looking for **THE BEST** staff and content. You are THE BEST...Join The Observer.



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The Observer Press Room

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

by Malery A. Louis

Hello fellow Knights! It has been an honor to serve as your Editor-In-Chief for *The SUNO Observer*. Journalism is an essential part of any society and one of my passions. During my term as EIC, it has been my goal to use this platform to inform and educate my community and fellow Knights. It was also my goal to execute a digital transformation and rebirth of *The Observer* newspaper through innovation. With the help of my team, I have been successful in accomplishing my goals.

We have been through so much these past years. But, if you are reading this message, you endured and made it! Resilience is a key characteristic of a SUNO Knight, one *The Observer* and its staff embody. We have worked hard to transform our university and remain innovative in the process. Our continued innovation is what led the team to take my idea and turn it into a reality, **S.K.L (Saturday Knight Live) SUNO's 1st Live Newscast!** We have worked hard to manifest editorial greatness with initiatives meant to improve the management of *The Observer*, strengthen its editorial perspective and expand its readership. I believe the stature of *The Observer* resides not only in innovations but

also in the quality of the material that it publishes. We will **NEVER** substitute our quality when presenting the facts and opinions of Southern University at New Orleans, its students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

As my time as EIC comes to an end, I challenge you Knights to continue to overcome the challenges life presents and remain focused. Draw from our history and accomplish the goal to maintain, support, and nourish Southern University at New Orleans, for future generations.

Always and forever a SUNO Knights!!!

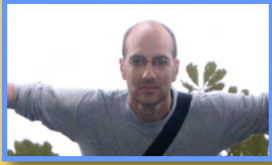




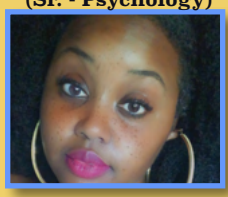





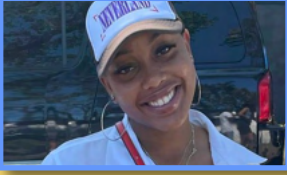




Sincerely,

Malery A. Louis
Editor-In-Chief



THE OBSERVER STAFF 2021-2022

The staff of *The SUNO Observer* is honored to manage the official student newspaper of Southern University at New Orleans. We accept the challenge to serve all SUNO students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters. We take our journalism duty seriously and work hard to report news and information that is accurate, relevant, and beneficial to our readers. We cannot do this without your input and support. **WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR FEEDBACK, OPINIONS, CAMPUS EVENTS, CAMPUS NEWS, IDEAS, AND CONTENT SUGGESTIONS!!** Email us today at sunobserver@suno.edu and let us know what you want to see in *The Observer*!

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
|  | | | | |
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| (Grad Student C.I.S.)  | (Jr. - English)  | (Grad Student C.I.S.)  | (Sr. - English)  | (Sr. - Psychology)  |
| MALERY LOUIS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF GRAPHIC DESIGNER S.K.L. EXECUTIVE PRODUCER | JASMINE BOSKENT MANAGING NEWS EDITOR | RB BUSINESS MANAGER DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR | WILLIAM WHITE SPORTS EDITOR | DUWANDALYN RUFFIN SENIOR STAFF EDITOR |
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-THE SUNO OBSERVER

CORRECTIONS

Facts and accuracy are our goals. As the voice of the Southern University at New Orleans student body, we are committed to our job. We are committed to ensuring the fairest, truthful and accurate accounts of our work. In the event of an error, we will place all corrections in this area in each edition. Please email corrections to the Observer at sunobserver@suno.edu.

The Observer is written, edited, and published by a member of the student body of Southern University at New Orleans.

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HBCU CLASSIC
HBCU LEGACY BOWL



CHANCELLOR'S CORNER

Dr. James H. Ammons

Reflecting on the spring semester, I would like to congratulate our spring 2022 graduating class. In January, what we thought would be a return to normalcy became a sort of divergence with the Omicron variant and a spike in COVID-19 cases, which prevented us from starting the spring semester face-to-face.

The thought of our students finishing stronger than before and navigating through the unknowns amid a pandemic that started in 2019 shows tremendous tenacity. Let's not forget the impact that Hurricane Ida had on the University, students, faculty, and staff.

Here we are; our graduates and continuing students have passed the triumphs. For those who will return, we've committed to bringing all of our classes face-to-face with the hopes of the upcoming academic year being promising. On the rise, we have new academic programs, student activities lined up, and our Athletics program - which is sure to make campus life customary.

I am looking forward to a new chapter at Southern University at New Orleans. We have to be impactful, hopeful and remain enthusiastic. Go Knights, and congratulations again to our graduates.

#WeAreSUNO

The Results ARE IN... SUNO Students select Ms. Daryelle Mitchell as the 63rd Miss SUNO

by Jamal Burns

On April 8th, students took to the polls to elect the 63rd Miss SUNO and the members of her Royal Court. Students also cast their ballots to elect new members of SGA, including a new president. Ms. Daryelle Mitchell, a Biology major, was selected to serve as the 63rd Miss SUNO. In her campaign, Ms. Mitchell stressed the importance of being more than a pretty face in the yearbook. As queen she wants to make an actual difference on SUNO's campus. During her reign, her goal is to help increase student engagement and involvement in campus activities, assist with the enrollment process, and educate students about the abundance of scholarship and internship opportunities. New members of SGA were also selected during this election. Mr. Ronnie Dyer, who ran uncontested, was selected as the new SGA president for the 2022 -2023 school year. Congratulations to all the winners and candidates who participated in the campaign. See the full list of winners in *The Observer* Spotlight.



Photo by Southern University at New Orleans

OBSERVER SPOTLIGHT

Spring 2022 Chief Student Marshal Tiffany Colquhoun



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SUNO ATHLETICS IS BACK!! Newest Member of the NAIA and GCAC

by Jamal Burns



Photo by The NAIA

includes financial stability, sports sponsorship, accreditation, and a commitment to character-driven athletics. The institution must also have athletics facilities, strong enrollment numbers, strong retention rates, and overall financial commitment to athletics. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is a governing body of small athletics programs dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics. NAIA members provide more than 77,000 student-athletes with opportunities to play college sports, earn scholarships and compete in 27 national championships. The new NAIA members include Southern University at New Orleans (La.), North American University (Texas), Indiana University Purdue University Columbus (IUPUC), and Oakwood University (Ala.).

In addition to becoming a member of the NAIA, SUNO was also granted membership into the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (GCAC) for the 2022-23 season. SUNO is returning to the GCAC after deciding to restart its athletics program at the university level beginning the 2022-23 school year. With the admission of SUNO and Oakwood University, the GCAC will now have eight member institutions. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni are excited about the return of basketball and volleyball to The Castle. The energy athletics brings to campus has been missed since the decision was made to suspend the athletic program in 2019. With the return of athletics, the university can increase its appeal and grow its enrollment and retention numbers. The return of athletics will come at a cost of a \$100 athletic student fee each semester. Despite the fee we are all excited and can't wait until the games begin!

To be considered for admission, an institution must meet membership criteria. Admission criteria



Photo by The GCAC

Southern University at New Orleans Accreditation Reaffirmed for 10 Years

by RB



Photo by SACS

After being placed on financial probation by SACS in 2019, SUNO's accreditation has been reaffirmed! SUNO is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS). For the next 10 years no further reporting is required to the SACS.

A university receives accreditation from agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. In 2019 the university reported a \$7.7 million deficit during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. This reporting affected the university's accreditation. SUNO was able to identify all the causes of the deficit and correct them. By making this correction, the university was removed from probation in late summer of 2020.

To be reaffirmed, SUNO had to showcase compliance with over 73 standards contained in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. They also had to comply with the policies and procedures of the Commission. The university developed a Quality Enhancement Plan and hosted a committee of peers to review that plan. To show compliance the university shared with the committee its renewed focus on its strategic plan. This plan guided its critical mission-centric decisions to protect the academic core and create sustainability paths. The plan also focused on making sure fundraising and advancement efforts were enhanced, with specific focus on alumni and community organizations to provide continued support for student success initiatives. Dr. Eurmon Hervey, Jr., served as the accreditation liaison during the reaffirmation planning process. When asked he stated, "What the SUNO community was able to do in such a short time is nothing short of miraculous."

Resolution 138672: Tuition assistance to attend SUNO for Jefferson Parish

by Malery Louis



Photo by Southern University at New Orleans

Jefferson Parish residents interested in receiving their degree from SUNO now have an opportunity to receive assistance with the cost of tuition. In January, the Jefferson Parish City Council passed Resolution 138672. This resolution allows the Parish and SUNO to offer \$25,000 in scholarship assistance yearly over four years totaling \$100,000. Students must meet certain criteria to qualify for the aid. These qualifications are to be determined by the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor of Advancement, Dr. Kim E. Rugon. The application process has not been announced. However, the application process may be available for the 2022 -2023 school year.

Resolution 138672 is authored by Councilman Byron Lee. Councilman Lee currently serves the people of Jefferson Parish in District 3. District 3 is predominantly African American and includes parts of Marrero, Harvey, Waggaman, Avondale, and Kenner. He was term-limited out of the District 3 seat eleven years ago and re-elected in 2019.



The Return of Mardi Gras to the Big Easy (Laissez Lou bon temps rouler)

by Dana M. Bailey

COVID-19, and its many variants, shut down the city of New Orleans. Known for its live music and fulfilling eats, our city became the home of PPE, mask mandates, and social distancing. Since Mardi Gras was cancelled in 2021, city leadership and citizens have worked hard to curve the spread of the virus. The reward we gained for our efforts was culturally fulfilling. In 2022, Mardi Gras returned to the Big Easy in all its glory!

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell kicked off Mardi Gras celebrations by telling city residents, "Job well done!"

Citizens stayed vigilant and ahead of the virus to stop the spread. This year was a homecoming not only to Mardi Gras, but to the city of New Orleans. Laughter, music, marching bands, Mardi Gras balls, floats, food, and spectators once again lined our vibrant streets.

Fat Tuesday 2022 began with the 200+ year old tradition of the North Side Skulls & Bone Gang waking up residents in the Tremé neighborhood at the break of dawn. The day ended with the ceremonial midnight sweep of Bourbon Street. Finally, after one long year of waiting, the city once again flushes with culture, traditions, and new memories made on a (hopefully) post-pandemic Mardi Gras Day.

COVID-19 was not forgotten, though, and the city found a way to celebrate Mardi Gras pandemic style. The New Orleans Health Department (NOHD) took a fresh approach to safety by distributing free COVID-19 tests throughout the carnival season. The department not only distributed free tests at first-aid tents set up along the parade routes, but they also partnered with Krewe of Muses parade to give a unique throw to attendees. NOHD staff and volunteers setup distribution tents before the start of the parade and handed out thousands of at-homes, rapid COVID tests to the crowd. When asked about the collaboration with the Krewe of Muses, Dr. Jennifer Avengo, Director of NOHD, replied, "We are excited to be a part of the Krewe of Muses because we knew this would allow us to put more tests in the hands of our community."

The efforts by NOHD helped to stop the anticipated post-Mardi Gras COVID surge. As a result, the city has for the most part lifted its indoor mask mandate and proof of vaccine requirements for businesses. This year was indeed a Mardi Gras to remember. As a city, we truly know how to "Laissez Lou Bon Temps Rouler" no matter the circumstance!



Photos by Observer Staff

New Orleans vs. Carjacking: Are You Prepared?

by Thalneisha Weston

The city of New Orleans has always been chaotic, but things have gone to another level of late. Take carjackings, for example, which have risen close to 200% since the pandemic. Every night the news reports another incident, often involving teenagers. The city was shaken recently when a 73-year-old woman lost an arm and was dragged to death while being carjacked. Now this is the time to take control with the two P's: preparation and prevention.

Preparation is the action or process of making something or someone ready. To be prepared for a carjacking encounter, one must first educate themselves. It requires gaining familiarity with areas where carjackings have occurred. The next step is awareness. Before entering a place, know the surroundings and identify exit routes. Another helpful tip could be creating a plan that involves warding off attackers and getting to safety in the case of an attack.

Prevention can be helpful as well. For instance, when looking to park, observe to ensure the area is well lit or populated to avoid being alone or in a dark space. In cases where one may be driving, make sure to keep doors locked and windows rolled up to prevent any unwanted entrance into the vehicle. In any carjacking event, give up the car and spare your life. If the family is present, evacuate all members from the car and DO NOT try to pursue the suspect.

In addition to the above tips, take the time to trust Mayor Cantrell and the New Orleans Police Department. As of late, she has revealed her work with a city program that attempts to rehabilitate juvenile offenders called Juvenile Justice Intervention Center. The focus of this youth center is to direct their best interest through a professional culture. During this time, the youth present will be held accountable for their behavior in a manner conducive to personal growth and development. Supporting this effort could potentially be the first step towards a safer community.

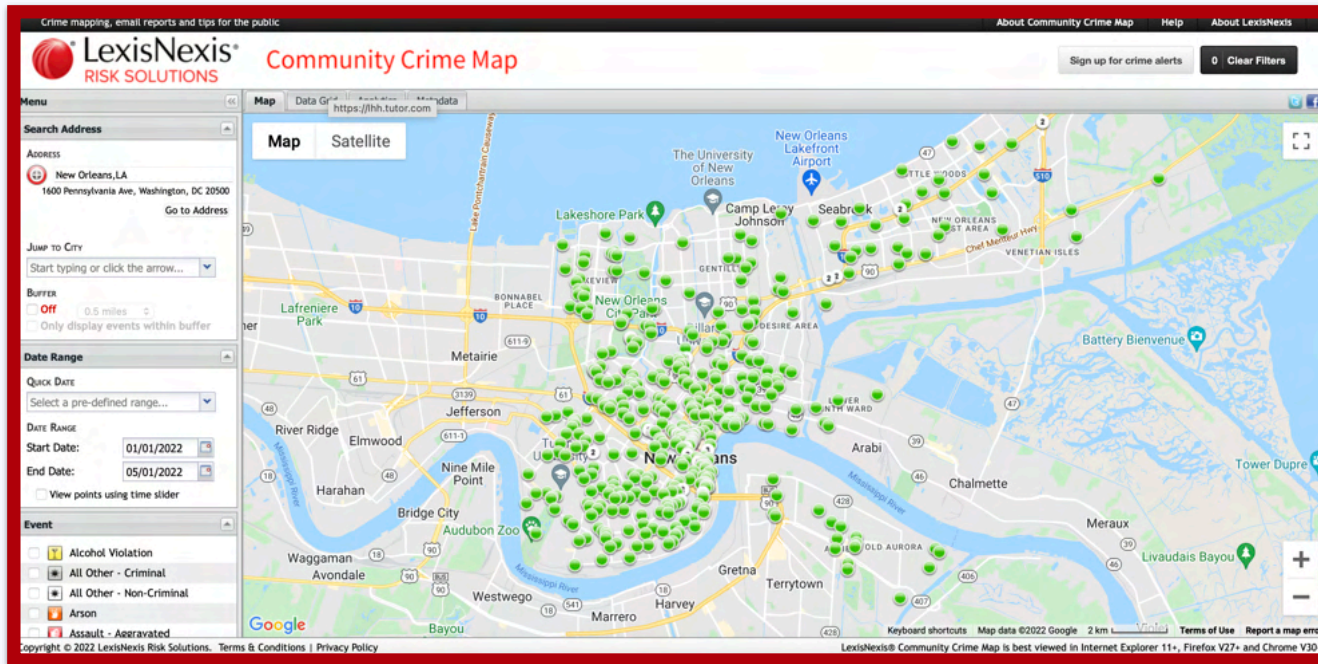


Photo By Lexi Nexis Community Crime Map

Juvenile Justice Intervention Center Contact Info
 1100 Milton St, New Orleans, LA 70122
 Phone Number
 (504) 658-3400
 Open from 7am-7pm
 NOPD Crime Map <https://www.nola.gov/nopd/data/>



Stay Alert and Aware Knights

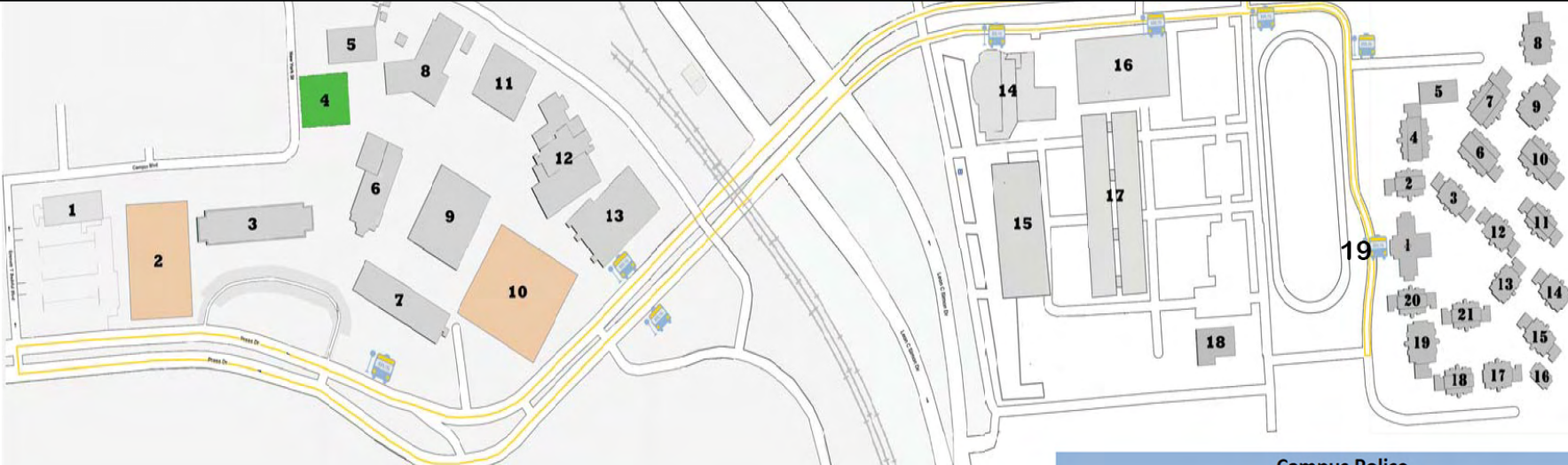
Emergencies: 911

Non-Emergencies:
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| Park Campus | |
|--|---|
| 1. Conference Center | 8. Maintenance Building |
| 2. Natural Sciences Building | 9. Leonard S. Washington Memorial Library |
| 3. New Science Building | 10. Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Building |
| 4. Tennis Courts | 11. Cafeteria (Knight's Dining Hall) |
| 5. Central Plant | 12. University Center |
| 6. Old Science Building (Brown Hall) | 13. University Gymnasium |
| 7. Emmett W. Bashful Administration Building | |

| Lake Campus | |
|---|--|
| 14. College of Business & Public Administration | |
| 15. College of Education & Human Development | |
| 16. Mille M. Charles School of Social Work | |
| 17. Multipurpose Complex (Modular Building) | |
| 18. Information Technology Center | |
| 19. Housing | |

| Campus Police | | | |
|---|------|------------------------|------|
| For general information and non-emergencies: 504-286-5291 | | | |
| For emergencies: Call 911 | | | |
| Departments / Schools Phone Extentions | | | |
| African American Studies Center | 5006 | Graduate Studies | 5484 |
| Arts & Humanities | 5154 | Health Info Management | 5083 |
| Business | 5331 | Natural Sciences | 5245 |
| Education | 5351 | Social Sciences | 5478 |
| General Studies | 5484 | Social Work | 5376 |

| Other Units' Phone Extentions | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|
| Admissions | 5235 | ITC / Helpdesk | 5237 |
| Athletics | 5197 | Registrar | 5175 |
| Bookstore | 5324 | SGA | 5358 |
| Cafeteria | 5317 | Student Activities | 5388 |
| Cafeteria Menu | 5301 | Student Development | 5360 |
| Cashiers | 5322 | Student Support | |
| Community Outreach | 5341 | Services / TRIO | 5108 |
| Comprehensive | 5026 | | |
| Communications Center | | Students w/Disabilities | 5335 |

Last updated on August 6, 2019

The Big Picture: HBCU Sports

By William White

Photo by HBCU Legacy Bowl



Photo by NBA HBCU Classic



When sports fans say, "HBCU athletes do not receive any recognition for their athletic performance," it sounds comical. Those who believe this statement must not watch any sporting events where HBCUs are participants. If they viewed HBCU games, they would see no lack of talent but equally competitive student-athletes striving for

the same opportunities as PWI students. But there is bias. For example, networks such as ESPN, Fox Sports, NBC, ABC, and CBS do not televise HBCU games. The only consistently televised HBCU game on mainstream media is the annual Bayou Classic between Southern and Grambling University. But, for the most part, Black colleges and universities

have always played second fiddle to predominantly white institutions.

In today's sports climate, everything is about numbers and audience viewership. The coverage of a team or player solely relies on getting social media attention for financial gain. However, if a player or university is not achieving that, they are useless to advertisers and networks. Hence most HBCUs are not put on TV. Media companies have

become increasingly limited in terms of resources; it has become essential to find teams and players who generate the most revenue. Because of this revenue model, HBCUs are getting the short end of the stick.

This is why HBCUs have relied on the black press for decades, and for the most part this is still true today. However, in 2020 things started to change. The leader of this change has been Coach Prime, Pro Football Hall of Famer, and College Football Hall of Famer Deion Sanders. In 2020 Sanders was selected as the 21st head coach of the Jackson State University football program. Since taking this position, Coach Prime has used his platform to shine a light on the disparity between HBCU and PWI athletic programs. This past March, Sanders called out the NFL Teams that did not attend JSU's Pro Day after receiving personal invitations to the event.

In a Twitter feed video, he stated, "24 teams came to witness our kids yesterday in its entirety, and I appreciate you. But there are 32 teams in this Crayola box. So, therefore, the Dolphins, Broncos, Texans, Bills, Buccaneers, Ravens, Panthers, Browns, Vikings, and the Eagles? So, you could have sent somebody, man, you could have shown up just a little bit, but I guarantee you that you will go to Mississippi State and Ole Miss. I guarantee you're going to show up there. I understand you say they have more talent; I understand. But guess what? We're coming!". And Sanders' efforts to showcase HBCU athletics have not been in vain.

In December of 2021, Cornerback Travis Hunter shook up the college football world. Hunter was regarded as the top prospect in the class of 2022. After flipping on his commitment to Florida State, he signed with Jackson State, which shocked everyone. Hunter's move opened the door for more conversations about HBCUs, their athletic programs, and the lack of support students receive from the mainstream media. So, while the HBCU Legacy Bowl and NBA HBCU Classic are steppingstones in the right direction, several changes are still needed to bridge the gap between the media coverage received by HBCUs compared to PWIs.

Photo by AAREG



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HBCU TRIVIA

1. What was the 1st HBCU?
 2. How old is the first HBCU?
 3. Which state has the most HBCU? How Many?
 4. How Many HBCU's are located in New Orleans?
 5. In what year was SUNO founded?
 6. How many HBCUs are there?
- Bonus: How many are Public Institutions? Private Institutions**

HBCU Trivia Answers
 1. Cheyney University of Pennsylvania 2. 185 Years Old 3. Alabama, 14 Institutions 4. 3. 5. 1956 6. 101 Bonus (52) Public (49) Private

To Hookah or Not to Hookah: The New Party Accessory

By Briana Brooks

The hookah is an instrument for smoking various flavors of tobacco that dates to the time of ancient Persia and India. But today, hookah is the new party accessory that most people think is a healthy alternative to smoking tobacco. Unfortunately, smoking hookah is more harmful than we can imagine. Each year the CDC conducts The National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS). This survey is a cross-sectional, school-based, self-administered survey of U.S. middle school (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12) students. In 2021 the results of the survey found that approximately one in 10 U.S. middle and high school students had used a tobacco product during the preceding 30 days. That is about (9.3%).

Hookah tobacco has many of the same chemicals found in cigarette smoke. Because of how a hookah is used, with charcoal and the heat of the tobacco, smokers may absorb more toxic substances as well as inhale 150-180 times more smoke, than a cigarette. Nicotine is an addictive drug that has a long-term damaging impact on adolescent brain development and correlates to unfavorable health outcomes for developing children. A hookah can cause some of the same diseases as cigarette smokers, including oral cancer, lung cancer, stomach cancer, cancer in the esophagus, and reduced lung function.

So why do we keep doing it? What keeps us going back? I believe it's the flavor and the feeling. There are so many flavors to choose from, such as watermelon and mango, and if you're from Nola, you know about the fruity New Orleans flavor at a trendy spot called Haifa Cuisine and Hookah Lounge. I think the good vibes and excellent music keep us returning for more of what we call "fun." Hookah indeed has only expanded and become more popular amongst younger people. But there's a good question of what we can do to prevent this "new party accessory" from becoming addictive.

The question is: Knowing its health risks, what can we do to prevent this "new party accessory" from becoming another addiction? The answer is we must dig deeper within ourselves and learn our limitations. Ask yourself: how would today be if we didn't have hookahs anymore? Would clubs still get a good crowd, or would they lose business? How would teens feel if they knew there weren't any more hookahs to buy? I don't think we would be missing out on much of anything if there were a ban on hookahs. We'd be avoiding several different types of cancer and avoid becoming addicted. You must know when enough is enough!

Smoking a hookah is no more healthy than smoking a cigarette. It only has a cleaner and sweeter smell and is an alternative to putting an actual cigarette to your lips. It is just as bad for your lungs. No one is here to judge because we all do things that make us happy now and then. But pause for a moment and think to yourself, "Do I need to smoke this hookah today? Or am I just doing it because of how it makes me feel?"

This new party accessory has our young people in a chokehold. Hookahs are backed by excellent marketing and many businesses make a massive profit off hookah. These businesses are innovative; they know what to say and do to get right at that table, and we go! So, to hookah, or not to hookah? What are you going to do?



Photo by GETTY IMAGES

Black TV is on the Rise: Must See TV for This Season

by Duwandalyn Ruffin



For the past two pandemic years, we have all been locked indoors watching more TV than ever before. Fortunately, streaming platforms are bursting at the seams with new content that feature people of color. We can now view Black TV shows of both past and present on streaming platforms like Starz, Netflix, HBO, and Peacock. *BelAir*, the dramatic remake of the beloved 1990s sitcom, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, is a popular series on the platform Peacock. *BelAir* follows a similar storyline of teenage issues familiar to millennials and Gen-Z's alike. The show is beautifully cast, with actors depicting the return of Carlton, Aunt Viv, and Uncle Phil. The relaunch leaves audiences with several fresh surprises and serious development of background characters.

Another current Black TV favorite is *Abbott Elementary*. The show is written and produced by quirky comedian Quinta Brunson, who started her celebrity journey on Instagram. Brunson plays the main character, and her costars are Tyler Williams and Sheryll Lee Ralph. The weekly sitcom follows three teachers managing in an underprivileged school. It develops several themes of satire and positivity within education and is, in my opinion, a must-watch. Black faces have not been left out of the Netflix-and-chill movement. Netflix now features a category titled Black Stories. It includes shows, movies, and documentaries like *Moesha*, *All American*, and *Jeen-yuhs*.

The Black TV renaissance is a breath of fresh air. Our contributions to TV entertainment is more viewable than ever before. We must thank those giants who preceded the new faces, paving the way for inclusive black television. We no longer rely on one or two intermittent movies to see our faces represented on screen. We are now showing up in *BIG*, *BLACK*, *LIVING COLOR*!

JUNE 27 - 29 2022 | NEW ORLEANS, LA

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Are Businesses forced to adopt a more agile workflow?

by RB

Absolutely! Technology has advanced tremendously within the last decade. Advancements in technology to high-speed Internet and wireless capabilities have helped increase our work mobility. I strongly believe that the 2020 pandemic affirmed that remote, hybrid workflows are feasible and more cost-efficient than traditional workflow models. During the pandemic, large corporations, like Apple and Google, were forced to adopt new business models to maintain their business operations. With most of their employees on lockdown, they had to develop safe work policies that relied heavily on agile work models. Why is this? Well, the US government issued strict regulations for people to distance themselves at least six feet apart from each other. In addition to social distance restrictions, there were also mask and vaccine mandates and new COVID protocols. Over the past two years, standard office environments and work models were forced to drastically change. Navigating COVID changes became quite daunting for companies. In response to record-breaking infection numbers, constant change, and the increased cost to maintain an office safely, most companies adopted fully remote or hybrid work models.

Agile workplace designs have become the go-to solution for creating an environment that fosters optimal productivity. A forty-hour workweek spent in a traditional office vanished overnight. It was replaced with sweatpants and Zoom links. Companies learned to make the virtual workplace experience come to life, using applications like WebEx, and Microsoft Teams. Having a remote business model quickly became the preferred and most cost-feasible form of business operations during and now after the pandemic. The silver lining to changing to an agile work model is the cost-benefit for employers in reducing building operations costs. Flexjobs estimated that US employers were saving \$30 billion every day throughout the coronavirus pandemic while their employees worked remotely. Calculations made by Global Workplace Analytics suggest that companies can save around \$11,000 per employee per year if they allow their employees to work remotely 50 percent of the time – taking into account productivity levels, lower real estate costs, reduced absenteeism, and turnover. The ability for such a large amount of people to stay connected and work from home was only possible through wifi improvements and the rollout of 5G internet.

While many of us enjoyed the luxury of working from home, not all businesses could benefit or fully adopt remote or hybrid models. Essential businesses such as emergency facilities and educational institutions still require an in-person element. However, for most industries, the pandemic and remote/ hybrid work models have forever changed the way the global community perceives “ways of working”.

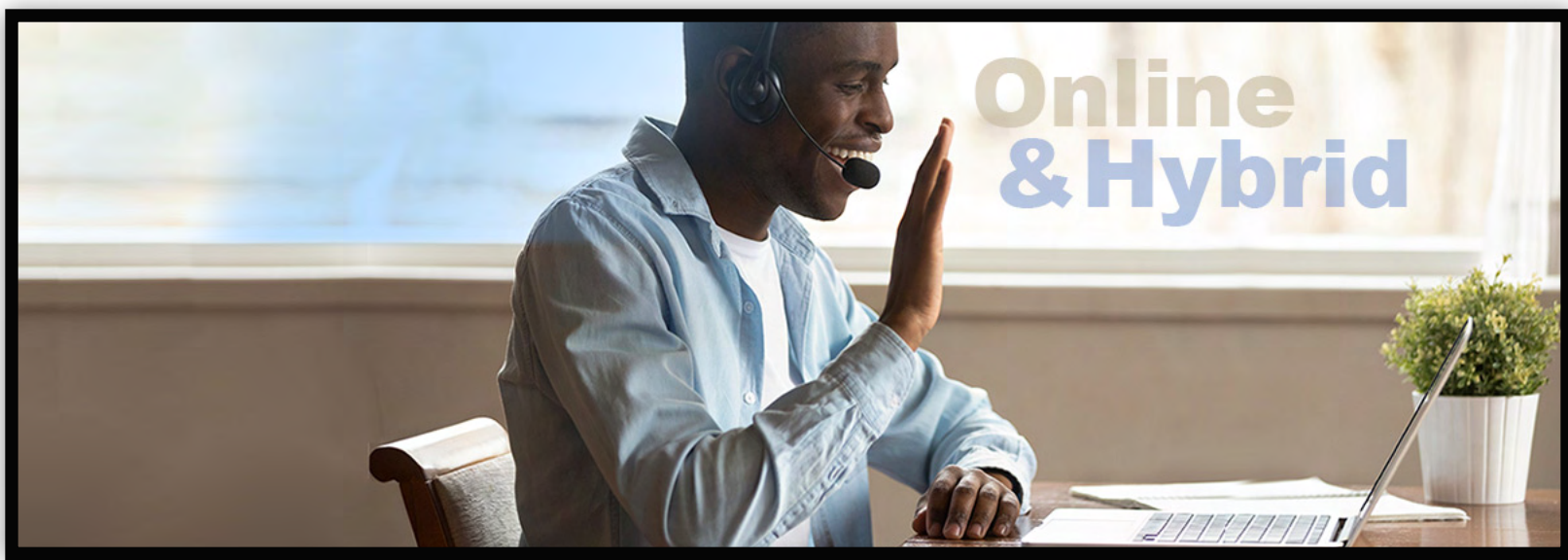


Photo by Shape America

Virtual Learning: Education Savior or Destroyer?

by Thalneisha Weston

Virtual learning, a web-based platform for digital study courses, is often used as dual enrollment to gain college credits in high school or on college campuses with various options available.

However, it has recently moved to the frontline of education due to the worldwide issues of COVID-19.

Although the preventive measures assist our physical wellbeing, many feel mentally neglected. In addition, research done by civil rights and advocacy groups such as the National Urban League, Alliance for Excellent Education, and UnidosUS suggests the effectiveness of instruction time declined as classes went online, and students of poorer backgrounds seemed to suffer the most. According to an article from *nola.com*, titled, “Study Exposes Racial Disparities in Louisiana’s Connectivity Gaps as Virtual School Continues”, analysis from state districts show that “in Louisiana, 36.5% of Black students and 36.5% of Latino students have no access to home internet, compared to 28% of White students. In all, more than 318,000 students in the state were found not to have high-speed internet.” The reasons vary, but the repetitive grievances against virtual learning are apparent. They are beginning with less in-person interaction, which has put a strain on students. Students who are used to raising their hands and getting immediate assistance now have to wait twenty-four to forty-eight hours for instructor interaction. Secondly, the technological requirements are next to impossible for families without computers in the home or who cannot pay for in-home Wi-Fi. Lastly, students are getting fewer networking opportunities than when on campus. So how can students overcome these adversities?

Many are arguing for solutions to these issues. They seek more in-person classes, as the virus's spread goes down. They want schools and libraries to provide, or at least rent, technology to students in need. These would be a good start if the situation were so simple, but it is not. Think of the students whose only social or emotional outlet is school. They experience social deprivation, leading them to a depressive state. Virtual learning is an option, but it also has repercussions.

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FUN FACTS: BLACK HISTORY

by Jasmine Boskent (Jr. - English)

Phillis Wheatley was the first African American to publish a book of poetry, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, in 1773. However, Wheatley was born in Gambia and sold to the Wheatley family in Boston when she was seven years old. As she grew older, she would soon be able to emancipate herself and release a book of her poetry.

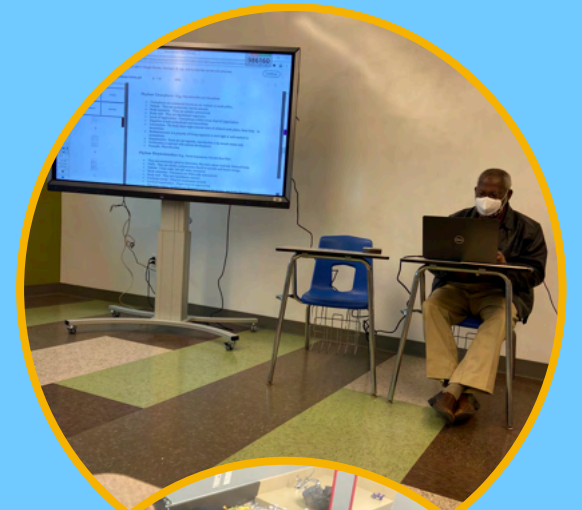
William Tucker was the first known Black person born in the 13 colonies. He was born in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1624. Many sources, such as *Black Past.org*, believe that his parents were indentured servants and part of the first group of Africans brought to America by Great Britain.

In 1981, broadcast journalist Bryant Gumbel became the first Black person to host a network morning show when he joined NBC's Today show.

Computer scientist Lisa Gelobter assisted with the 1995 creation of Shockwave, which led to the development of web animation.

In 1920, Fritz Pollard and Bobby Marshall became the first Black athletes to play in the NFL. Pollard was also the league's first Black coach.

The oldest Black female Greek-letter organization, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, was founded at Howard University in 1908. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the first Black male Greek-letter organization, was founded in 1906 at Cornell University.



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