



Southern University and A&M College  
**CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**  
to the  
Southern University Board of Supervisors

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"We Are Southern"

Report No. 4

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## More Than 300 Students Participate in Fall Commencement Exercises

With slight winds and partly cloudy skies, Southern University held its first outdoor commencement ceremony Dec. 11 since Nelson Mandela delivered the address in 2000. More than 450 students were celebrated in A.W. Mumford Stadium for completing requirements for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, President-Chancellor Ray L. Belton noted, "The sun is truly shining on Southern University and A&M College."

Belton commended the graduates for completing their degrees during very different academic year amid COVID-19, as well as Student Government Association President Chandler Vidrine and his fellow student leaders for working closely with the commencement committee to present the in-person ceremony.

Kim Hunter Reed, Louisiana Commissioner of Higher Education, served as the keynote speaker and echoed Belton's sentiments about the tenacity of the graduates.

"Today, graduates, is an affirmation that literally nothing could stop you and your dreams. Even a challenge of global proportions could not stop you," said Reed, a Southern University alumna. "You masked up, you marched on and you made it happen. So, today we come to celebrate what a Jaguar can do: EVERYTHING."

Reed highlighted several graduates for their determination, success and their service to community,

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**(COMMENCEMENT, Continued)**

including Sylvia Copper, an administrative specialist for the Louisiana Senate, who started graduate school at 75 to pursue a master’s degree in public administration. She graduated at the age of 79 with a second master’s.

Reed, Louisiana’s chief talent development officer, encouraged students to focus on the future.

“We focus on a future where you, graduates, will propel America and Louisiana forward; a future where Black lives, Black children, Black America matter; a future where quality health care, quality education and quality jobs are a reality for everyone; a future where your aspirations and talents matter.”



Louisiana Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed.

# SU Accreditation Reaffirmed by SACSCOC

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges recently reaffirmed accreditation for Southern University and A&M College for the next 10 years. The accrediting body announced the decision at its annual meeting on Dec. 8, 2020.

“As you are aware, this decennial review provides for the continual accreditation of SUBR for the next 10 years and speaks to the diligence of many who comprise the Southern University higher education community,” said Ray L. Belton, chancellor of Southern University Baton Rouge and president of the Southern University System, in a statement to stakeholders.

As part of the reaffirmation process, institutions must submit a compliance report and quality enhancement plan (QEP) for student learning. Southern’s plan, “JAGS: Journey to Achieve Greater



**Dr. Vladimir Alexander Appeaning (third from the left), honored by the Board of Supervisors for his work regarding the reaffirmation of accreditation.**

Success,” focuses on improving retention of students through intervention during the first-year experience of undergraduate students. The plan incorporates

planned curriculum revisions in gateway courses in three select disciplines and a more coordinated academic enrichment effort in support of first-year students.

# ON CAMPUS...

## **Library Staff and Top Administrator Present on Outreach and Creating Partnerships**

Library Dean Dawn Kight together with librarians Maya Banks and Eddie Hughes participated in the 2020 LOUIS Users Conference (LUC), held virtually via Zoom.

LUC is an annual gathering of consortium members from throughout the state. Scheduled annually since 2003, the LOUIS users conference brings together members to share new developments at their libraries, to share best practices, new technologies or new modes of operation.

The presentation *How Far is Your Reach?* highlighted the Library's outreach activities over the last year. Librarians and staff at John B. Cade Library use outreach to create positive associations with the library that contributes to the library's support of the University's mission for research, teaching, and learning. Through the library's programming committee, several events and activities were held so that students will see the library as a partner in their college success and to remove barriers, so that students feel more comfortable seeking help.

## **Quality Matters Enhances Online Learning for Fall 2020**

During Fall 2020 semester, Southern University Online offered 51 courses from 40 unique faculty members. These courses, on average, had an initial Quality Matters compliance score of 76%,

but after revision and instructional design consultations, the average QM compliance score increased to 91%. Twenty-six of the 40 faculty members scheduled a total of 52 instructional design consultations to improve their courses. Additionally, the Concourse syllabus tool, which improves ADA compliance and user experience, was included in 59% of SU Online fall courses. After fall course reviews were completed, SU Online facilitated three faculty development sessions to address Quality Matters standards with the lowest compliance scores; 86 unique faculty members attended at least one session and 19 of those attending faculty requested follow-up instructional design support for future semesters. Additional Quality Matters and design training are being developed now for the spring semester.

In December, Dr. Francesca Melleion-Williams and Dr. Tonya Rose became Quality Matters certified facilitators. They successfully completed the rigorous, three-week online workshop that will enable them to facilitate Quality Matters workshops across the Southern University System. Recruiting highly motivated and experienced online faculty to complete advanced Quality Matters workshops is integral to the SUBR Campus QM Plan that focuses on institutional capacity building, and continuous improvement in online education.

## **New Financial Aid Counselor Hired for Online Learning**

To improve the overall Southern University experience for online

students, a dedicated SU Online Financial Aid Counselor was onboarded in December. The new counselor is an experienced financial aid counselor and is able to provide services to students from inquiry to enrollment. Providing early assistance with the overall financial aid process and make early award decisions will impact enrollment and retention of online students. The counselor will work closely with the SU Online Admissions Coordinator and Online Program Coordinators to ensure that as an institution we proactively address areas of student and staff concern.

## **New Minor in Entrepreneurship Planned for Non-Business Majors**

The College of Business is working diligently to develop a minor in entrepreneurship for non-business majors. The proposal is being submitted to the University Curriculum Committee for approval. The minor in entrepreneurship is designed to provide non-business students of all majors with the fundamental knowledge and skills in business to develop entrepreneurial spirit needed to start-up their own business in their post-graduate life. The interdisciplinary nature of this minor provides students from all academic disciplines with a vast knowledge-base in entrepreneurship. The goal of the Entrepreneurship minor is to empower non-business students of all majors across campus with the skills needed to create economic and social value either for a startup or as part of a high-performing entrepreneurial project.





## Redstick Battalion Adjust Programming During COVID-19

Fall 2020 semester marked a significant change in the method of delivery for NROTC's core functions: course instruction, physical training, and mentorship.

With a renewed focus on recruitment, building relationships with Southern University's staff, and improving the quality of instruction, this past semester marked a revolution in flexibility and creative process development for Southern University's Redstick Battalion.

By expanding course instruction delivery to virtual platforms and offering hybrid delivery across the

spectrum of Naval Science courses, the Redstick Battalion is now open to the prospect of delivering instruction to its partner universities and beyond in a flexible, tailorable format. This process development is designed to improve SUNROTC's ability to deliver course material and instruction to students at partner universities – BRCC, SELU, and LSU – giving rise to opportunities to bolster Southern's student presence and SUNROTC's unit health.

Students reporting physical scores via virtual means are now able to participate while quarantined,

while on break for the holidays, or simply while in-person physical training is not possible. Physical training requiring presence of the students has been flexible and in keeping with CDC standards.

Mentorship is a core function of Naval ROTC. Staff members meet with each Midshipman on a routine basis to check their progression through the program, identify areas of weakness, advise on ways to improve, and to ensure overall health mentally, physically, and emotionally. The COVID environment has increased the personalization of that mentorship as well as the flexibility.