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2021 VIRTUAL LIVESTOCK EXPERIENCE

The Southern University Ag Center will host its 2021 Virtual Livestock Experience on March 25 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. via Zoom.

This free event is open to all youth. Animals are not required to participate.

During the experience, participants will receive information from current livestock show judges and educators on animal selection, feeding and proper facilities for swine, cattle, sheep, goats, and much more.

The administration of the Southern University Ag Center recommended hosting a virtual Livestock Experience instead of the traditional Livestock and Poultry Show to keep our exhibitors, supporters, and staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We still wanted to have an event for the youth of Louisiana to learn and benefit from as they continue to raise animals for years to come,” said Dr. Harold Mellieon, Jr., Livestock Show Director for the Southern University Ag Center. “Having speakers and presenters that are also judges and educators sharing the information with the participants is also a huge benefit because the youth will be able to see how making small changes in their husbandry practices can make a difference in the show ring. And with this being virtual, our participants and their families can be in the safety of their home, absorbing all of the information and asking questions to prepare for the 80th annual show in 2022,” added Mellieon.

Registration is required to participate. To register for the Virtual Livestock Experience visit <http://bit.ly/3b7FtV1>.



Urban Forestry Alumnus Ansel Rankins Appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Commissioner Mike Strain appointed SU Department of Urban Forestry alum, Dr. Ansel Rankins, Sr., to serve as the Office of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Assistant Commissioner in December 2020. Rankins has been with the LDAF since 2006, beginning his career as an agricultural environmental specialist in Baton Rouge, and promoted to the director of the Horticulture and Quarantine Programs Division in 2015.

Dr. Rankins is a native of Greenville, Miss. He earned an undergraduate degree in agronomy from Alcorn State University. He also earned a Master's and a Ph.D. degree, both in Urban Forestry from Southern University and A&M College, in 2014 and 2019 respectively.

“He did an outstanding job in his research and published an excellent dissertation. I was very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as his doctoral committee chair,” says Dr. Zhu Ning, Professor and Department Chair. “Dr. Rankins serves as an excellent role model for young students, and he is one of the real-life testimonies that attract students to SU's Urban Forestry degree programs. The professionalism, strong family value, class, and kindness of Dr. Rankins and his wife Mrs. Rankins are often talked about among the students in the Urban Forestry, Environment and Natural Resources Department,” added Dr. Ning.



The legacy of SU Ag Center's Quiz Bowl

Southern University Ag Center's Owusu Bandele uses the Black History Quiz Bowl to teach youth the importance of Black History

For 26 years Southern University's Black History Quiz Bowl has been held on the campus as an educational tool used to stimulate the university's students. The competition covers a variety of topics, including current events, politics, history, sports, and entertainment.

The quiz bowl's organizer, Dr. Owusu Bandele began the event in 1994 after several faculty and staff decided to have a Black History program within the University's College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences (CAFCS). Dr. Bandele decided to host a discussion on Black Female/Male Relationships. Following the success of the event, his research associate at the time, Marion Jarvis, suggested that he host a quiz bowl, and thus the CAFCS Black History Quiz Bowl was born.

Dr. Bandele said it became his passion to educate youth about Black history after graduating from Towson State University in 1963.

"The history curriculum was taught from a white supremacy perspective, and did not include the history and contributions of African Americans," recounted Dr. Bandele. "When I began teaching middle, and later high school in Baltimore City, I always incorporated our history in my teaching. Likewise, in teaching agricultural courses at Southern University I always included the rich history and contributions that Africans and African Americans have made to the agricultural sciences," he said.

In 2016, Bandele, with the help of Erica Williams Mitchell, conducted two elementary Black History Quiz Bowls at Brownsfield and Audubon Elementary Schools. Dr. Bandele also hosted a science quiz bowl with special emphasis on the scientific achievements of African and African Americans at Audubon Elementary that same year. "Initially, the teachers at Audubon were somewhat uneasy because much of the information that I provided in the study guide was not covered in their curriculum," added Dr. Bandele. "However, they were pleasantly surprised at the level of preparation and outstanding performance of their students," he added.

The Southern University Ag Center has continued to conduct Black History Quiz Bowls at the school each year.

In 2017, Dr. Bandele began conducting quiz bowls at several middle schools in the Baton Rouge area, and included high schools the following year at individual schools, culminating in middle and high school championships at the Southern University Ag Center with the best teams from each school competing.

Plaques or medallions are given to the top three teams in each division, and all participants at the championship rounds receive books written by or about people of African descent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the Southern University Ag Center to postpone its 2021 Black History Quiz Bowl, but plans are underway to safely host the event.

Bandele began his tenure at Southern in 1987 as an assistant professor. He went on to obtain the rank of associate professor, and later, full professor in the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences until the establishment of the Southern University Ag Center in 2001. In 2009, Bandele was awarded the title of professor emeritus following his retirement.

Erica Williams Mitchell, a Research Associate at the Southern University Ag Center, has assisted Dr. Bandele in conducting the Black History Quiz Bowls at all levels for the past twenty years and was a member of the team that won first place during the first Collegiate Black History Quiz Bowl in 1994.



Daniel Leija is a Spring 2016 graduate of the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences where he earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Urban Forestry with a concentration in Plant and Soil Sciences.



What was the deciding factor in attending Southern University A & M College and majoring in Urban Forestry?

Most of my family attended and graduated from THE Southern University and A&M College. I'm very proud to not only have my foundation built at Southern University, but to also have many who proved what a career in agriculture could be for me. I wasn't just a number at Southern or in the Urban Forestry department. They made me feel like family. From day one, it was nothing but love, guidance, financial help, and they really made sure I succeeded. They are very hands on, they invested so much time, energy, and effort into me during my time there. They set the foundation to succeed. I could not fail! They gave me every tool and resource I needed to succeed at Southern and in life. I'm forever grateful! I probably would not have attended College without them, and I did so with minimal student loan debt. My professors saw something in me that I did not notice, and started to build that confidence that many young men like myself are in pursuit of. I am a reflection of who they are and what they stand for. I will never settle with my goals, dreams, and interpersonal relationships. I will always strive to reach my full potential.

DANIEL LEIJA



What internships were you offered, and how important was it to have those internships as you matriculated through your undergraduate studies?

I earned my first Internship with the USDA Forest Service after attending a MANRRS conference in the spring of 2012, my freshmen year. In 2014 the agency brought me back to the same location I did my first internship. The summer of 2015, I earned an internship with SU Ag Center as an assistant extension agent. I was stationed in New Orleans and had the opportunity to work in the areas of youth development and community outreach. Internships are the key factors in assisting recent graduates in gaining employment opportunities. I actually earned my first post-graduate opportunity with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a Soil Conservationist in 2016, primarily because of those internships. Many private companies and government agencies want you to have experience before graduating. In order to gain experience, you have to be aggressive in your pursuit.

The spotlight is currently on HBCU's now more than ever before. There has always been a perceived notion that you have to work twice as hard to be noticed, or move up the corporate ladder after graduating from an HBCU. How do you feel about this statement today?

That notation is very true. I don't like the perception, but it's very true. HBCU graduates are competing domestically and globally in agriculture, and we are making an impact. Just like many great leaders in the world, I am a product of a HBCU and my HBCU provided me with a stable and nurturing environment.

You have had a very impressive career in a short time span. You have worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), and you recently accepted a new position with USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). How important is it to move around in these different agencies? There are always bigger and better opportunities out there. You just have to want it. Some may say it's not good to move around from job to job, but I used every opportunity that I earned as a stepping stone to a bigger picture. It takes time to find your passion, and purpose in life. Never limit yourself and always have options.

What contribution will you leave behind for those Urban Forestry/ Plant & Soil Science students that are coming behind you? I'm always open to passing the torch and helping those that will follow in my footsteps. I am always available to give back in any way possible. Resume and Cover letter building, and allowing students to have access to the same connections I have made in the Ag industry. Providing students with community service opportunities that involve Ag related activities, and giving them access to all the resources that I've been privy to. It's like the old adage, "When you know better, you do better." It takes a village, and I will definitely do my part.





UAS 95

Six recently enrolled Master's students from the Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Department, under the advisement of Dr. Yaw Twumasi, Associate Professor of GIS, remote sensing and hydrology, have begun working towards their scholarly presentations for the 95th virtual meeting of the Louisiana Academy of Science within their first semester. The students submitted five abstracts to the Academy, which was hosted by Louisiana Tech University on March 12 and March 13, 2021.

Graduate and undergraduate students competed in posters and oral presentations on their research for awards within their division during the event.

Southern University's students submitted abstracts on the following topics:

- ***“Monitoring Aerosol Concentrations in The Sahara Desert Using Google Earth Engine” - Abena Asare-Ansah***
- ***“Urbanization and The Emergence of Slums: Case Study of Jamestown, Accra” - Diana Botchway Frimpong***
- ***“Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on The Yield of Pepper Production in Louisiana” - Faustina Owusu***
- ***“Understanding the balance between Urban Development and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Urban Areas” - Priscilla Loh***
- ***“Monitoring the extent of illegal Mining (Galamsey) in Ghana” - Sakina Amankwah***

Photo Caption: From left to right: Faustina Owusu, Abena Asare-Ansah, Sakina Amankwah, Priscilla Loh, Diana Botchway Frimpong and Abigail Afia Yeboah



Dr. Yaw Twumasi, an Associate Professor of GIS, Remote Sensing and Hydrology in the Department of Urban Forestry and Natural Resources has been appointed as a topics board member and guest editor from the editorial office of the European Remote Sensing Journal, headquartered in Switzerland, to develop a Special Issue on Remote Sensing and GIS-based Coastal Disaster Monitoring. The invitation and selection were based on Dr. Twumasi's strong publication record in the subject area. Dr. Twumasi was selected as one of the

world's top experts in the field of remote sensing and GIS to develop a Special Issue out of thousands of GIS and remote sensing instructors from around the world. For two decades, Dr. Twumasi has been at the forefront of GIS/ Remote Sensing research in North America and Africa. He is an author, experienced researcher, analyst, and accomplished scholar. He has published and authored one book, and co-authored seven articles in a book and more than 200 publications in a variety of referred journals and local, national, and international conferences and symposia proceedings, and had delivered numerous papers and presentation on his research on a variety of topics addressing the use of remote sensing and GIS technology in assessing and managing Earth's resources at local, national, and international meetings in the United States, Russia Federation, Australia, Spain, Canada, France, Netherlands, South Korea, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chile, and Costa Rica, etc. His book on GIS and Remote Sensing Technology Application in Protected Area Management in Ghana has a wide circulation globally in both academic institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

He has received numerous awards. He was the co-recipient of the "Best Paper" award in "Urban Growth Model using GIS and Remote Sensing" at the 5th African Association of Remote Sensing and Environment (AARSE) conference at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Headquarters held in Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya in 2004. In the spring of 2019, Dr. Twumasi was nominated as an "Outstanding Rising Star" in research and publications at Southern University's College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences.

Dr. Twumasi has also reviewed several major national and international scientific peer-reviewed journals relating to natural resources and applied remote sensing and GIS. These include but are not limited to the Journal of Arid Environments, British Journal of Environment and Climate Change, International Journal of Remote Sensing, Canadian Journal of Forest Research, Journal of Water and Soil Research, and IEEE Transactions on Geoscience and Remote Sensing. He is a current member of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS), African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE), IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (IGARSS) in the U.S. and past member of the United Kingdom's (UK) leading Society for remote sensing and photogrammetry (RSPSoc).



Photo Caption: Representatives of the Urban Forestry alumni, students, employers, and administrators of the Department, College, and University with SAF accreditation site review team.

The College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences Urban Forestry Bachelor of Science Degree Program was officially granted a full specialized accreditation by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) on January 1, 2021. The accreditation will be valid through December 31, 2025.

As stated by the National Accreditation Agency, “SAF accreditation is a form of quality assurance that declares to the professional community and to the world at large, that a degree program meets the quality standards set by the profession.”

SAF is the only accreditation agency for the nation’s forestry education programs. According to SAF, “this achievement offers several benefits, such as peer-review, recognition of the program’s commitment to quality, and practical insights from the working professionals who review the programs.”

The Urban Forestry B.S. Degree Program is administered by the Department of Urban Forestry, Environment, and Natural Resources within the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences at Southern University and A&M College and the SU Agricultural Research and Extension Center. The Department offers unique and non-duplicating Urban Forestry B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degree programs in the State of Louisiana. The Department has earned the Departmental Excellence through Faculty Excellence award from the Louisiana Board of Regents in 2003, as well as the Most Productive Research Department award from the Southern University System in 2015. The faculty members are nationally and internationally award-winning experts who provide the best education, research and training for ultimately producing the highest quality and diverse graduates contributing positively to the workforce by honorably serving the state, the nation and the world.

As stated by the SAF Accreditation Committee, “Urban Forestry faculties are enthusiastic and effective teachers who are highly dedicated to their students. All faculty members are actively engaged in research, with publications, presentations, and other efforts. Faculty members have received numerous national, regional, and university awards and recognitions for their scholarship, teaching, and service to the profession. All remain current in the profession through scholarship, serving as editors and peer reviewers for scholarly publications, and participation in many continuing education opportunities.”

The Department is committed to continued partnerships with state, federal, industrial and alumni supporters that are essential in sustaining and enhancing this monumental recognition and achievement in the history of Southern University.

For more information, please contact Zhu Hua Ning, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Urban Forestry, Environment, and Natural Resources, at zhu_ning@subr.edu.

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