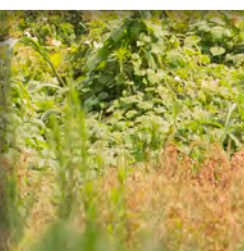
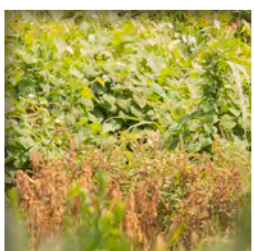
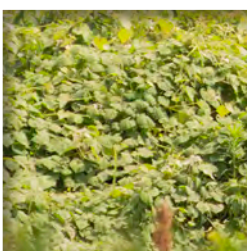
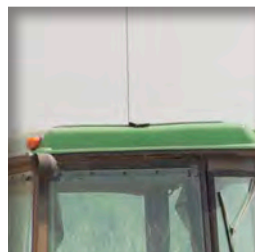


SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY **AG CENTER'S**

SU SEEDS OF *Success!*

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

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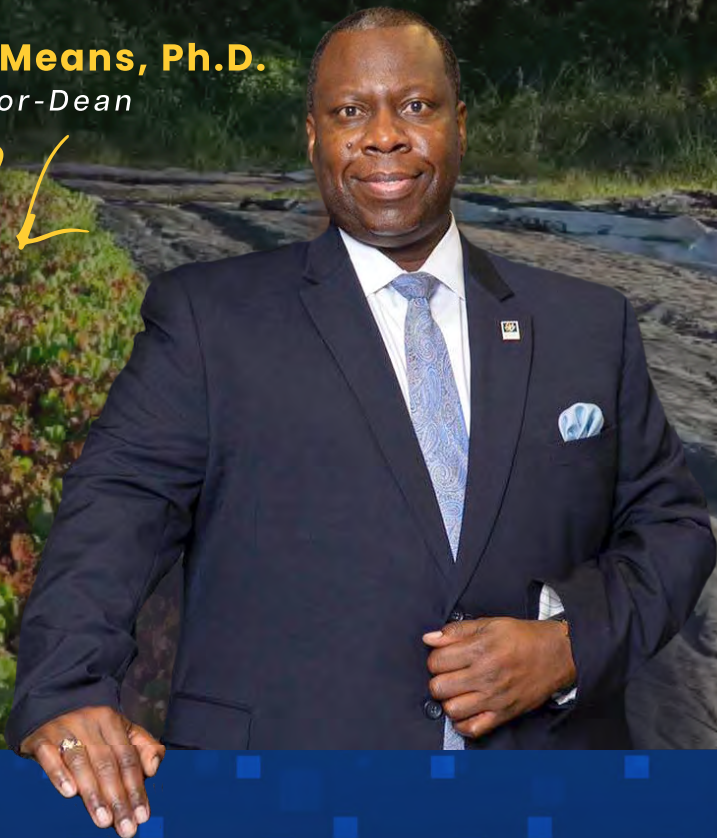


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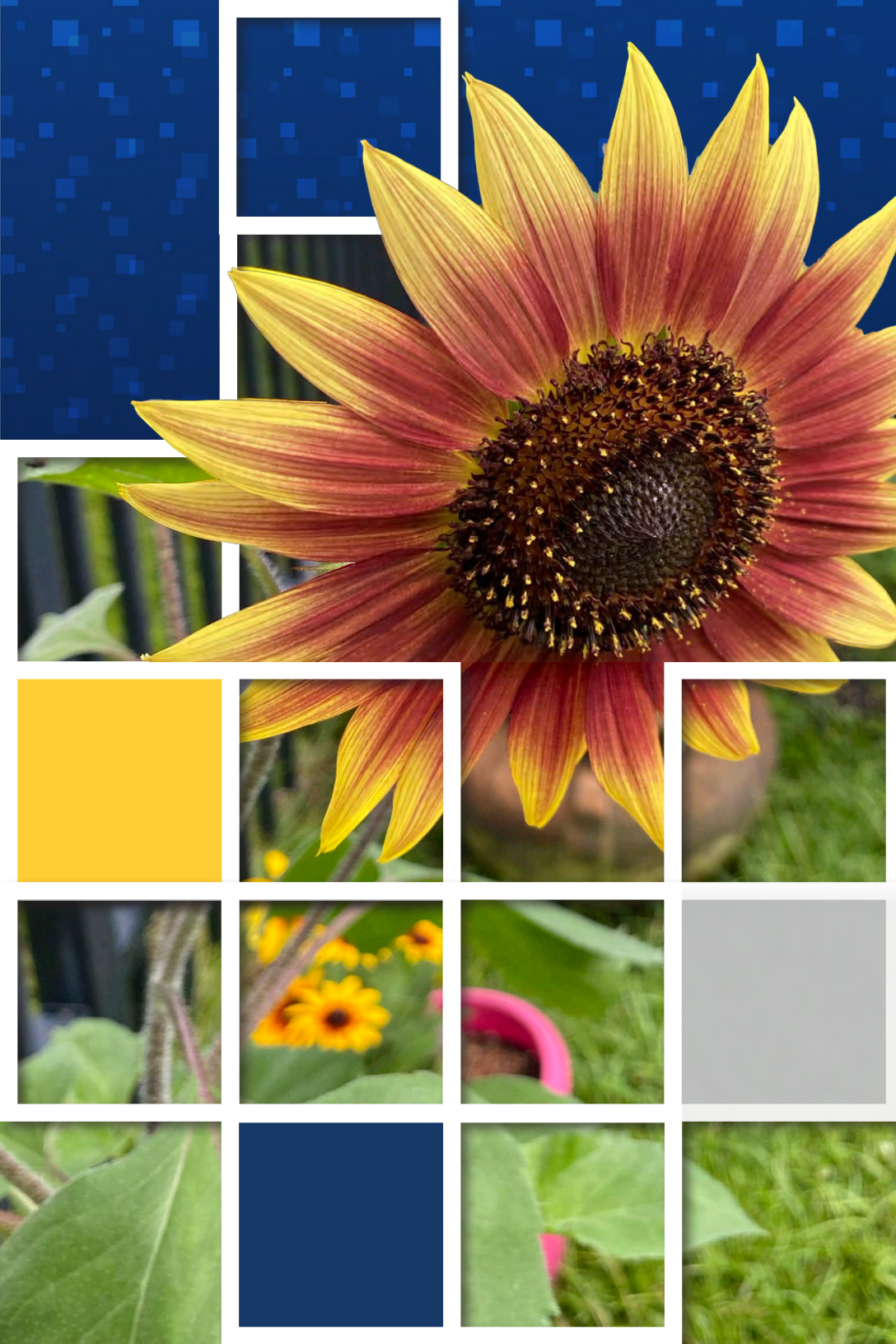
Clyde Bagley, Ph.D.

*Vice Chancellor,
Research*



Brunetta Gamble-Dillard, MBA

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Dr. Kim Hunter Reed visits the SU Child Development Lab As Part of 'Read Across America'



Louisiana Board of Regents Commissioner, Dr. Kim Hunter Reed visited the Southern University Child Development Laboratory (SUCDL) on Feb. 27, 2025 as part of the Regents "Read Across America" initiative. Dr. Reed read the beloved Dr. Seuss classic, *The Lorax*, to students in the toddler, three-year-old, and Pre-K classes.

"We are elated that Dr. Reed has chosen to spend time with our young learners, reinforcing the importance of early literacy and fostering a love of reading at an early age," said Keisha Dandridge, Program Director of the SUCDL. "*The Lorax* is a timeless story that teaches valuable lessons about responsibility, caring for the environment, and using our voices to make a difference with messages that align beautifully with the core values we instill in our students every day," she added.

Each student also received a special gift from Dr. Reed to commemorate the visit.

"As we celebrate this exciting event, we remain committed to sharing the incredible learning experiences happening within our laboratory school. We are grateful to Dr. Reed for her time, passion, and dedication to education," expressed Dandridge.

Read Across America is an annual event that promotes reading for children and is held on a school day closest to March 2nd each year. National Read Across America Week, which starts on Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2, 2025, reinforces the importance of reading with a focus on young children.



SU Ag Center's 82nd Annual State Livestock and Poultry Show Recap



Nearly 100 youth exhibitors from throughout Louisiana gathered at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena from February 27 – March 1, 2025 for the Southern University Ag Center's 82nd Annual State Livestock and Poultry Show.

The exhibitors showed around 130 breeds of cattle, hogs, sheep, lamb, goats, and poultry during the event. The winners took home cash prizes, premiums, banners, ribbons, rosettes, and trophy belt buckles.

In addition to the annual show, the Ag Center held several events leading up to the annual livestock show.

“BOOTS & BLING” AFFAIR 2025

The 3rd Annual Boots and Bling Affair was held on February 22, 2025 in the F.G. Clark Activity Center. Nearly 1,000 attendees were entertained by zydeco artists J. Paul Jr. and the Zydeco Nubreedz. The event raised \$10,000 for the SU College of Ag and the SU Ag Center's Pathways Scholarship fund. The Non-Stop Trail Riders Club also donated \$1,000 to the Livestock Program to provide opportunities for young exhibitors and ensure that the Livestock Show continues for future generations.



LIVESTOCK APPRECIATION LUNCHEON 2025

Individuals who have made an impact on the Livestock and Poultry Show were honored during the Livestock Appreciation Luncheon on February 23 at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena Multi-Purpose Building. This year's Trailblazer Award recipients were Melinda Miles, Sarah Sims, Renita Woods Marshall, Ph.D., Harold Mellieon, Ph.D., Curtis Chisley, and Christie Gremillion-Monroe.



LIVESTOCK GIVE DAY 2025

The 3rd Annual Livestock Give Day was held on February 25. Eighty-two individuals were asked to give \$82 in honor of the Livestock Show's 82nd anniversary. Nearly \$10,000 was raised during the event for the Pathways Scholarship fund.

As an addition to Give Day, a virtual roundtable discussion on the impact of the Livestock Show was streamed on social media platforms. The panelists for the roundtable discussion were Lt. General Russell Honoré, Henry Harrison, Robert Harrison, and Pathway Scholarship recipients, Sydney Marshall and Caitlyn Johnson.

THE EDUCATIONAL AG EXPO 2025

Approximately 1,500 students from East Baton Rouge Parish Schools and surrounding areas participated in the SU Ag Center's Educational Ag Expo on February 26. The students visited nearly 40 interactive exhibits that included ATV Safety, a mechanical bull, a petting zoo, cow milking, goat yoga, train rides, tractor and farm safety, information on community policing, hands-on gardening, drones, entomology, and agricultural displays.





The event, which was held at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena Multi-Purpose Building and the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena, introduced students to the offerings in the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences, the programs and services available in the SU Ag Center, and the many career opportunities available in the field of Agriculture.

FRIDAY NIGHT WITH THE STARS OLD FASHION DECORATING CONTEST 2025

The Friday Night with the Stars Old Fashion Decorating Contest was held on February 28 in the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena. This event is held to allow the exhibitors to have fun with their animals one last time before the Junior Auction on Saturday morning.

AWARDS PROGRAM AND JUNIOR AUCTION 2025

An awards program was held on March 1 at the Maurice A. Edmond Livestock Arena with the Junior Auction immediately following. Congratulations to all the winners. To view the full list of winners visit, <https://www.suagcenter.com/news/7237>.



Professional Development Training Held for SU Ag Center & CAHES Administrative Assistants



SU Ag Center and the College of Agricultural Human and Environmental Sciences Administrative Assistants participated in a professional development seminar on March 13, 2025, in the Magnolia Room of the Mayberry Dining Hall.

Dr. Donovan Segura, Associate Vice Chancellor for Compliance, provided greetings for the seminar and expressed his appreciation for the group. He also reminded the administrative assistants of their value to the Center and the College.

The seminar was facilitated by Lori Palisi and covered the topics of Five Powerful Steps to Move You Forward, Assertiveness and Responsibility, Prioritize Demands of Multiple Bosses, Stress Management, Problem-Solving and Crisis Management.



CAHES Undergraduate Students and Faculty Conduct Groundbreaking Research Aboard the Point Sur Research Vessel



In an exciting collaboration with the Mississippi River Delta Transition Initiative (MissDelta), Southern University College of Agricultural Human and Environmental Science (CAHES) undergraduate student Nickolas Lawrence and faculty members Drs. Jacqueline McComb, LaShunda Hodges, and Crystal Vance conduct research on the Point Sur Research Vessel, a floating laboratory for scientific exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. This unique opportunity allows students to engage directly in hands-on marine research, contributing to the broader understanding of the Gulf's diverse ecosystems, climate patterns, and environmental changes.

Undergraduate students, guided by experienced faculty, are exposed to real-world data collection methods and gain invaluable fieldwork experience. They assist in gathering samples, analyzing water quality, studying marine life, and assessing the impacts of human activity on the region's delicate ecosystem.

The involvement of faculty members ensures the research is conducted with academic rigor and

provides mentorship to the students, fostering a collaborative environment where knowledge and ideas flow freely. This partnership within the MissDelta advances scientific discovery and nurtures the next generation of marine scientists and environmental stewards.

Through the collaboration of students and faculty, these research expeditions are not just about collecting data, they are about empowering the next generation of scientists to shape the future of marine conservation.

Undergraduates can sign up now for a 1-day science cruise in the Gulf of Mexico. Students will gain hands-on research experience on an ocean research vessel through data collection and educational activities led by MissDelta scientists. Applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis per institute. For additional information on Southern University's participation in the Mississippi River Delta Transition Initiative contact Dr. McComb at jacqueline.mccomb@sus.edu. To learn more about the MissDelta Site visit, <https://www.missdelta.org/>.



Students and Faculty Destress Through Goat Yoga During Mid-terms



Southern University College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) students and faculty participated in the “Bleat the Stress! Goat Yoga on March 11, 2025 on the lawn of Fisher Hall.

The event was held to help students and faculty members manage stress during mid-term week on the Southern University Baton Rouge campus. Dr. Dana Pollard, assistant professor of animal production system, instructed groups of students and faculty in various yoga poses while goats bashfully walked around the participants. Soft instrumental music played in the background during the two yoga sessions which lasted about 45 minutes each.



The focus of the goat yoga event was to improve the mental health of the students and staff through yoga techniques and interactions with small ruminants. The event helped to increase the flexibility of participants, improve their strength and build endurance, regulate emotions, build balance, and reduce stress and anxiety.

Adding the element of the goats complimented the therapeutic effects of yoga.

For additional information on the goat yoga event contact, Dr. Dana Pollard at dana_pollard@suagcenter.com.



Spotlighting Carolyn Robinson for Women's History Month



**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

Carolyn Robinson is an Area Agent and a Regional Supervisor for the SU Ag Center's Family and Human Services/ Nutrition Education in East and West Carroll, Madison, Richland, Morehouse, and Union Parishes.

During her 32 years working in Cooperative Extension, she has served as an Assistant and Associate Field Agent for EFNAP and SNAP-Ed.

Carolyn began her career in Extension at Louisiana State University on June 1, 1993, where she served as an EFNEP Program Supervisor. She became employed with Southern University in 1997, as both the EFNEP Supervisor at LSU and the Supervisor of Southern University's FF-News, currently called SNAP-Ed.

She has held several titles at the SU Ag Center including the Supervisor of the FF-News Family First Nutrition Education Wellness Systems Program at FF-News (SNAP-Ed), and Assistant and Associate Area Agent.

Carolyn said she selected the field of agriculture after exploring several majors.

"I started in social work and that kind of gave me what I wanted to be able to help people in the community, but it limited me in what I wanted to do," she remembered. "I was informed that Extension had a position, and I applied for it. I could see from the first day I started working in Extension that it was exactly what I wanted to do. My passion was to help people, and I don't think I could have picked any other occupation that would give me the justification to help individuals improve their lives and have a better quality of life," expressed Robinson.

In her work, Carolyn teaches parenting, financial management, and anger management classes. She also trains nutrition educators, teaches nutrition lessons to junior high and high school students, and nutrition education lessons and MyPlate at Head Start Centers. She also assists the elderly in the completion of their Personal Health Manuals.

"I write down all the medication they are taking in the manual if someone finds them incoherent, they will have a list of all their medications, their doctor's name, and have all of their information on hand so they can be transported to the hospital," Carolyn explained.

In addition to this, Carolyn's unit holds summer Creating Health Enjoyable Foods (CHEF) Camps for youth and provides nutrition information to Senior Centers, The Council on Aging, and assisted living centers.



CAROLYN ROBINSON

“It is a lot of work, but we enjoy it,” said Carolyn. “What makes me happiest is when people come back to me and tell me things that I have taught or said to them that has made a difference in their lives. That just satisfied my whole heart.”

Carolyn said her proudest contributions in her career was receiving her Active Parenting Certificate and working with the youth and the elderly.

“Everything starts with our parents,” she explained. “If we have good parents we will have good children,” she said. “I’m so proud that I started the CHEF Camps in East and West Carroll and from there all the other parishes had to get on board to hold the camps after I discussed my success. I had as many as 42 students each day of the camp. I enjoy teaching these young people how to prepare food for themselves and their siblings so if their mother is sick or has to work late, they can prepare food without turning on a stove or worrying about burning the house down because we teach them to cook meals and healthy snacks on griddles. I like working with elderly people. They are still our educators, and we can learn more from them than we can from a book,” she added.

Carolyn’s contributions to Cooperative Extension can be felt throughout the Parishes she serves. She is truly a trailblazer in the field of Agriculture.

SARDI Teaches Sustainable Agriculture to Students at Lawtell Elementary School

The SU Ag Center’s Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Institute (SARDI) has been working to introduce agriculture to youth at an early age through a partnership with Lawtell Elementary School’s Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) Program.

The students learned how to germinate seeds, prepare soil, and choose spring/summer vegetables for the school’s garden project on February 11, 2025 during a Spring/Summer seedling demonstration lead by Assistant Area Agent, Kayla Fontenot. Lawtell will be one of 10 schools that will be participating in SARDI’s school gardening program this Spring.

SARDI staff members also brought live poultry to the elementary school on February 18, 2025. During the presentation, the students learned to care for and raise the chickens. Several students also participated in the Ag Center’s 82nd annual Livestock and Poultry Show.

For additional information on SARDI’s programs contact the office at 337-943-2410.



SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program Launches New Podcast, "Food For Thought"



**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**



Episodes Quarterly

The SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program proudly announces the debut of its new podcast, Food For Thought, which officially launched on March 31, 2025.

Food For Thought aims to educate and engage listeners on various aspects of nutrition, wellness, and healthy living. Hosted by SNAP-Ed Program Director Joshua McDonald and Field Coordinator Si-Arah Jones, the podcast will feature insightful conversations with nutrition experts, wellness advocates, and community leaders. Topics will include healthy eating habits, food accessibility, physical fitness tips, and cultural food traditions.

"We are excited to bring a fresh and accessible platform to our community," said Joshua McDonald, Program Director. "Our goal is to empower individuals with the knowledge and resources needed to make healthier choices and improve their overall well-being."

The inaugural episode delves into the essential components of balanced nutrition and the importance of food education in Louisiana communities. Future episodes will explore a wide range of topics, including food insecurity, meal preparation tips, and smart shopping.

Food For Thought will be available on the SNAP-Ed YouTube page and other media platforms, including the SNAP-Ed Nutrition website. New episodes will be released quarterly.

For more information on the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program and to stay updated on upcoming episodes, visit www.suagnutrition.com.

SNAP-Ed Celebrates National Nutrition Month With "Farm to Table" Campaign



The SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education Program proudly observed National Nutrition Month this past March with an engaging social media campaign series, "Farm to Table."

The campaign aimed to inspire and empower communities to maintain proper nutrition by growing their own food. Through a series of educational posts, videos, and interactive content, SNAP-Ed provided valuable tips on sustainable gardening, healthy meal preparation, and the benefits of consuming fresh, locally grown produce.

"We wanted to highlight the importance of self-sufficiency and the positive impact that homegrown food has on both physical health and community well-being," said Joshua McDonald, SNAP-Ed Program Director. "Our goal was to equip individuals with the knowledge and tools needed to make healthier choices while embracing the benefits of community gardening."

Throughout the month, SNAP-Ed's social media platforms featured lessons from our East Baton Rouge and East Feliciana Parish nutrition educators. These lessons covered proper

produce harvesting, creative recipes using homegrown ingredients, the nutritional benefits of fresh produce, and tips on restarting a garden by planting new fruits and vegetables.

The "Farm to Table" campaign aimed to foster community engagement and raise awareness about the importance of food security and healthy eating habits. SNAP-Ed looks forward to continuing its mission to promote wellness and nutrition education across Louisiana.

For more information on SNAP-Ed's programs and future initiatives visit, www.suagnutrition.com.



**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

Six Students Earn Pilot Certificates From the SU Ag Center's Precision Agcademy Youth Drone Certification Program



The SU Ag Center celebrated the completion of its inaugural drone certification cohort for the Precision Agcademy Youth Program on March 15, 2025 in Opelousas, La. Six students from St. Landry Parish completed their training and are now equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to obtain their FAA Part 107 Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Certification. This marks a significant milestone for both the students and the program, positioning them to pursue career opportunities in industries that rely on drone technology, including agriculture, real estate, and power utilities.



The drone certification courses, which introduced participants to the basics of FAA Part 107 regulations, were led by Dr. Charity Schaffer, Youth Development Agent, and Robert L. Easley, Jr., Director of Advancement at the SU Ag Center. Both instructors brought a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience in drone operations, offering the students a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practicalities of drone flying and its various applications.

"Our goal is to provide youth with the skills and certifications that open doors to career paths in cutting-edge industries," expressed Dr. Schaffer. "Drones are revolutionizing fields such as agriculture, and we are proud to help these students gain the foundational expertise needed to enter this exciting, technology-driven workforce," she added.

For additional information on the SU Ag Center's Youth Development Program contact, Dr. Raquel Ayles at raquel_ayles@suagcenter.com.



Precision Agcademy Hosts Inclusive Drone Demonstration for Hammond High School Students



The SU Ag Center's Precision Agcademy recently welcomed two classes from Hammond High School for an exciting, hands-on drone demonstration led by Dr. Charity Schaffer, SU Ag Center Youth Development Agent. Students from Coach Kovi Dillon's class learned the basics of drone operations and experienced the thrill of piloting these high-tech tools under Dr. Schaffer's guidance, on separate days.

The interactive sessions introduced students to fundamental drone controls, safety procedures, and practical applications. Each participant had the chance to take the controls and explore advanced features, including spotlighting and point-of-interest tracking. The demonstration showcased how drones are used in various industries, sparking curiosity and enthusiasm among the students.

A standout moment came when a student who is deaf/hard of hearing actively participated with the support of an ASL interpreter. The experience underscored Precision Agcademy's commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment where all youth, regardless of learning ability, can engage in STEM education and drone technology.

"We believe in providing hands-on opportunities for all students to explore the exciting world of drones," said Dr. Schaffer. "It's inspiring to see their confidence grow as they take control of the technology and realize the possibilities."

Through initiatives like this, Precision Agcademy continues to break barriers and ensure that drone education is accessible to all. By fostering an inclusive atmosphere, the academy empowers students of all abilities to discover new skills and career paths in the ever-evolving field of drone technology.

For more information on drone demonstrations, contact Dr. Charity Schaffer at charity_schaffer@suagcenter.com or (225) 222-4136.



**COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**

Dr. Clyde Bagley Named the Vice Chancellor of Research at the SU Ag Center



Clyde Bagley, Ph.D., has been named Vice Chancellor of Research at the Southern University Ag Center. The appointment was made on Feb. 21, 2025, during the Southern University System's Board meeting.

Dr. Bagley has over 40 years of experience in agriculture research and academia. He filled the position on March 1, 2025.

As the Vice Chancellor of Research, Dr. Bagley will promote and expand the research mission of the SU Ag Center by increasing and supporting the scholarly activities of faculty, students, and partners/ collaborations; provide guidance and leadership to faculty through collaborations, the development of professional enhancement programs, and assistance in seeking and obtaining extramural funding. He will be responsible for the administrative oversight of the operations and maintenance of research facilities and experiments associated with the research sites. He will also work with officials from the Southern University System, state, and federal officials to ensure that the research being conducted is done so in a compliant and responsible manner.

Prior to becoming the SU Ag Center's Vice Chancellor for Research, Bagley was the Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Director of the Beef Research Unit at the Ag Center.

Dr. Bagley earned a B.S. and M.S. degree from Louisiana State University and a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech University.



CLYDE BAGLEY, PH.D.

Faculty & Staff Highlight

Keisha Dandridge Elected 1st Vice President of the Louisiana Head Start Association

Keisha Y. Dandridge, Program Director of the Southern University Child Development Laboratory, Instructor in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Environmental Sciences (CAHES), and Advisor for the Child and Family Studies Club, has been elected to serve as the 1st Vice President of the Louisiana Head Start Association (LHSA).

In this role, Dandridge will contribute to shaping policies, enhancing program effectiveness, and promoting best practices in early childhood education at the state level.

With 27 years of experience as an early childhood educator, Dandridge has demonstrated unwavering dedication to the advancement of quality education for young children and the professional development of early childhood educators. Since joining the CAHES family in 2018, she has been a fully engaged and committed member, wearing her role within our SU Ag Family as a badge of honor.

Her election to this prestigious position within LHSA is a testament to her expertise, leadership, and passion for advocating for young learners, families, and early childhood professionals across Louisiana.

Dandridge's commitment to excellence, innovation, and advocacy continues to elevate the mission of CAHES, reinforcing its legacy of leadership and service in early childhood education and community engagement. We look forward to the impact she will make in this new leadership role.



Faculty & Staff Highlights

Dr. Krystle Allen and Si-Arah Jones Complete the Prestigious LEAD21 Leadership Training



Dr. Krystle Allen, SU Ag Center's Program Leader for the Family and Human Sciences and Assistant Specialist for Community and Economic Development and Si-Arah Jones, SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed Program Field Coordinator and Assistant Specialist for Nutrition, completed the nationally recognized LEAD21 leadership development program in February 2025.

LEAD21 is a nine-month program designed to cultivate leaders in land-grant institutions and their strategic partners by integrating research, academics, and extension to drive impactful leadership in an increasingly complex environment. It provides faculty, specialists, program and team leaders, research station and center directors, district and regional directors, department heads, and other professionals with the tools to enhance their leadership effectiveness. Through an intensive curriculum, participants engage in dynamic learning experiences, peer networking, and strategic problem-solving exercises tailored to the evolving challenges faced by land-grant universities and USDA/NIFA organizations. With participants spanning the country over the past decade, LEAD21 has played a pivotal role in developing leaders who are well-equipped to advance the mission of agricultural, environmental, and human sciences institutions.

The completion of this training by Dr. Allen and Jones signifies their commitment to excellence and their readiness to apply innovative leadership approaches within their respective fields. Their participation not only reflects personal and professional growth but also enhances the broader impact of leadership within the land-grant system.

As alumni of LEAD21, Dr. Allen and Jones join a distinguished network of leaders dedicated to fostering positive change and sustainable development in their institutions and communities.



KRYSTLE ALLEN , PH.D.



SI-ARAH JONES



SU AG PODCAST

Tune in to the latest episode of the SU Ag Podcast! Dr. Teodoro Espinosa-Solares, Senior Research Professor of Food Science and Bio Processing, will discuss his innovative work in enhancing food quality and sustainability. His work focuses on advancing food processing techniques to improve nutritional value, utilizing advanced technologies like nanotechnology and biotechnology in food production. Dr. Espinosa also offers insightful advice for anyone considering a career in agriculture, whether you're already committed to the field or still exploring your options.

Hosted by:

Dexter "Dex" Newman



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE AT:
<https://bit.ly/41Pt2Y0>



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