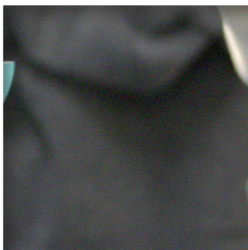
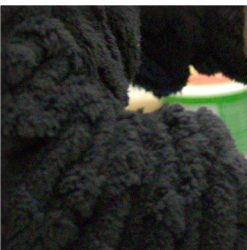
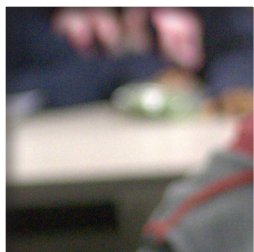


SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY **AG CENTER'S**

# **SU** SEEDS OF *Success!*

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

**VOLUME 23 | NO. 5 | MAY 2025**





**SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**

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Chancellor-Dean



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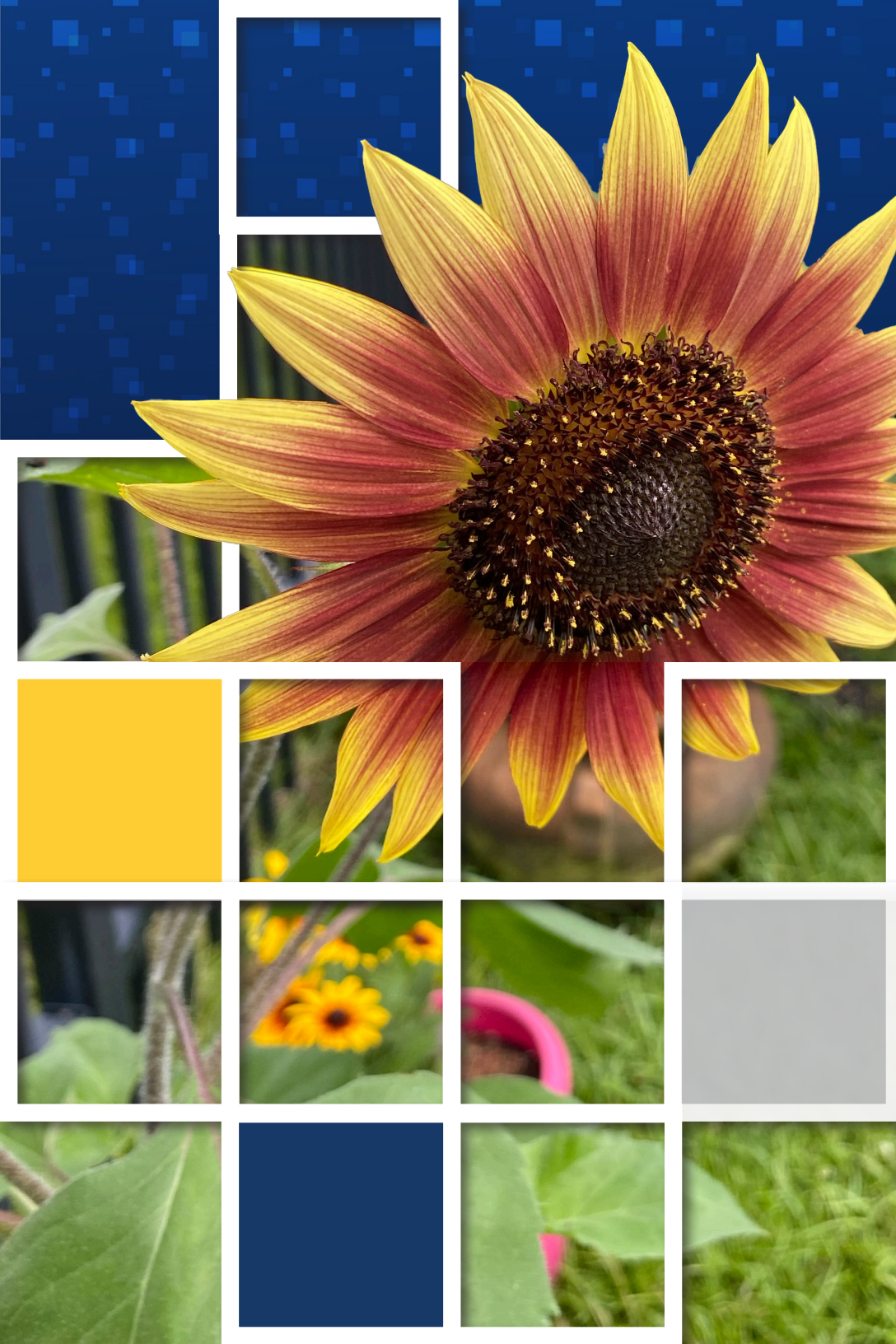
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# Dr. Orlando F. McMeans Receives the Career Achievement Award From the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



Orlando F. McMeans, Ph.D., Chancellor-Dean of the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences, was one of three recipients of the 2025 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) Career Achievement Award.

The award is presented to alumni who have demonstrated exceptional professional achievements and/or made extraordinary humanitarian contributions resulting in meaningful or life-changing impacts on a significant population.

"I am honored to be named a recipient of the prestigious University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Career Achievement Award," expressed Dr. McMeans. "My educational experience in ACES was indeed transformational in my career path as a scientist, academician, and administrator," he stated.







Dr. McMeans earned both his master's and Ph.D. in horticulture from ACES. He also has a Bachelor of Science degree from Alabama A&M University.

“The relationships I developed with my mentor, Dr. Robert M. Skirvin, faculty, staff, and peers have endured over the years since I graduated with my doctoral degree from the U of I. I thank ACES for all they have done for me and this special recognition,” said McMeans.

During the Alabama native's career, he has served as the vice president for research and public service at West Virginia State University (WVSU), director of the Department of Land-Grant Programs, executive director of the WVSU Research and Development Corporation, and dean and director of the WVSU Gus R. Douglass Land-Grant Institute. He is also a full tenured research professor of biology. He has served in his current position at the Southern University Ag Center since 2019.

Dr. McMeans is actively involved in numerous national, regional, and local organizations, holding leadership positions and memberships that reflect his commitment to agricultural advancement. Notably, he served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and chaired the APLU's Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) Policy Board of Directors. He is also engaged in various committees and steering roles within organizations such as the Association of Research Directors (ARD) and the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy.

Each year, ACES recognizes the achievements of its exceptional alumni in the categories of Outstanding Young Alumni, Career Achievement, Award of Merit, and ACES Family Spirit. The 2025 winners were honored during the ACES Alumni Awards Gala on April 14, 2025, at the Pear Tree Estate in Champaign, IL.

To view a list of the 2025 ACES Alumni Winners visit, <https://aces.illinois.edu/alumni/awards>.



# THANK YOU!!

*Thank you for your years of service to the Southern University Ag Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences!*



The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and the College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences recognizes the members of our faculty and staff who are celebrating their 10 and 40-year anniversaries of employment. The employees participated in the Southern University Office of Human Resources Employee Service Awards Luncheon on March 25, 2025 at the Leon R. Tarver II Cultural and Heritage Center. Your hard work and dedication are greatly appreciated.



**Felton DeRouen, III**  
*Research Associate*

**Meguna Johnson**  
*Director of Livestock Show Programs*

**Harold Mellieon, Jr.**  
*Research Assistant/Professor*

**Angela Phelps**  
*Special Assistant to the Chancellor*

**Sonia Wilson**  
*Director of Grants and Contracts*



**Linda Crawford**  
*Administrative Assistant 4*

**Dr. Calvin R. Walker**  
*Executive Vice Chancellor/  
Director of Development:  
SU Agricultural, Research and  
Extension Center Special Projects*



# SU Ag Center & College of Ag Hold Ag Basketball Game



The Southern University Ag Center and the College of Ag hosted an Ag Basketball Game on March 8, 2025, at the Felton G. Clark Activity Center as the Jags faced off against the Alabama A&M Bulldogs.

During the women's and men's games, three Ag Swag Bags were given away along with Ag shirts. The Ag Ambassadors and recruiter also manned a table display with giveaways, and members of the Center's executive team were also recognized on the court during the recruitment event.





# The College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences Celebrates National Ag Week



The College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences (CAHES) proudly celebrated National Ag Week from March 17–25, 2025 with a series of impactful events highlighting the importance of agriculture and student engagement.

Throughout the week, CAHES Ambassadors and SU Ag NextGen Global Scholars, under the supervision of Alexis Motley, Dietetic Internship Director and Instructor, supported the fight against food insecurity. These student leaders contributed by stocking the campus food pantry and preparing meals for distribution through campus refrigerators.

As part of CAHES outreach efforts, student leaders also hosted a Virtual Open House to engage prospective students interested in pursuing degrees within the College. The event provided valuable insight into academic programs and student life.





In collaboration with the community, Assistant Research Professor Dr. Dana Pollard; Research Associate Calvin Adams; and Research Assistant Felton DeRouen, led the educational session AG 101: Grow with the Flow – Exploring Animal Husbandry & Plant Sciences. The session welcomed participants from all majors and community members, offering hands-on experiences in animal husbandry, plant propagation, and even sheep shearing, an activity involving students in Human Sciences.

In partnership with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the CAHES' Alpha Zeta Fraternity hosted a Career Day to inform students about how degrees in agriculture align with various career paths in environmental and wildlife services. Alpha Zeta is a professional, service, and honorary fraternity for men and women in agriculture.

To conclude the celebration, members of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) student organization hosted an International Day of Forests: Urban Forestry Beautification Event. Participants gained hands-on experience in environmental stewardship by planting native pollinator plants and mulching fruit trees along the Urban Forestry Educational Trail located on Southern University's campus. The event emphasized the significance of pollinator gardens and urban forestry in sustainable ecosystems.

For more information about National Ag Week's events contact Keandrys Dalton at, [keandrys\\_dalton@suagcenter.com](mailto:keandrys_dalton@suagcenter.com).





# SU MANRRS Members Thrive at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual MANRRS Conference and Career Expo



Members of Southern University's chapter of the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) made their mark at the 39th Annual MANRRS Training Conference and Career Expo held in Memphis, TN, April 2 - 6, 2025. This prestigious event brought together students, professionals, and industry leaders committed to advancing diversity in the agriculture and natural resource sectors.

The conference provided SU's MANRRS members with invaluable opportunities for personal and professional growth. They participated in various workshops, which included topics on resume building, leadership development, and effective networking strategies. The sessions were designed to equip students with the skills they need to navigate the job market successfully.

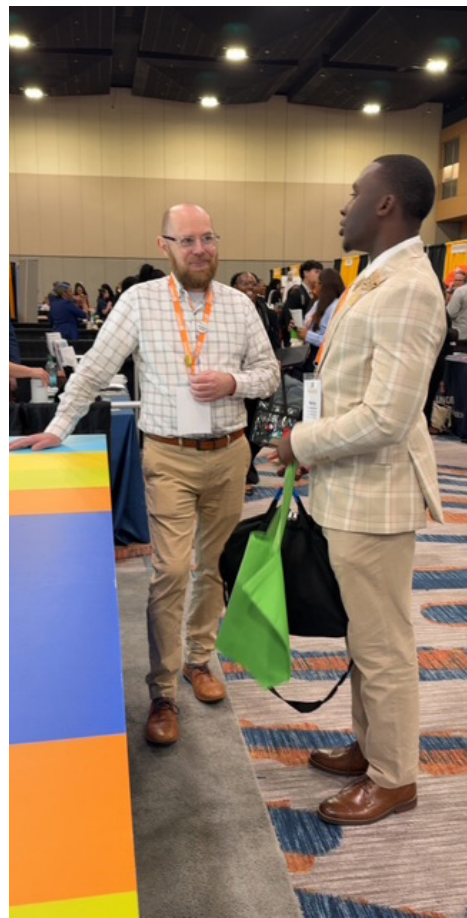
A major highlight of the conference was the Career Expo, where SU students engaged directly with recruiters and representatives from leading organizations. Through mock interviews and networking sessions, members showcased their talents and aspirations, gaining insights into what employers seek in candidates. This interaction not only boosted their confidence but also expanded their professional networks.





Beyond individual growth, the conference emphasized the importance of diversification within the agricultural and natural resource industries. Keynote speakers and panel discussions inspired attendees to pursue careers that drive positive change in their communities.

Overall, SU MANRRS members returned from Memphis enriched with knowledge, new skills, and lasting connections, poised to become the next generation of leaders dedicated to fostering diversity in their fields. This conference was more than just an event; it was a stepping stone toward a brighter future for these aspiring professionals.





# Southern University Ag Students Explore Marine Science at LUMCON Excursion



Southern University's College of Agricultural, Human, and Environmental Sciences faculty members Drs. Jacqueline McComb and LaShunda Hodges and students Ikira Butler, Taniya Nichols, and De'Aree Harris participated in an immersive undergraduate excursion to the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) from April 11–13, 2025. The multi-day field experience allowed students to deepen their understanding of marine and coastal sciences through direct, hands-on activities.

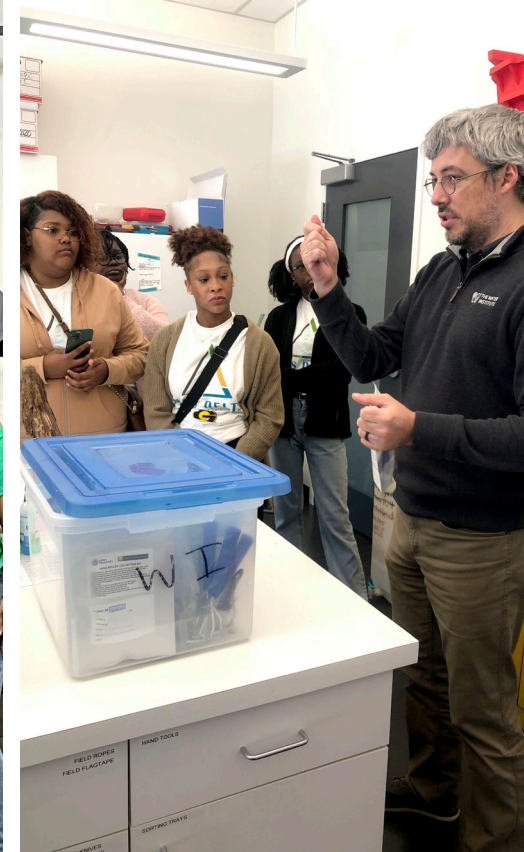
The excursion featured two primary learning experiences. First, participants boarded the *Acadiana*, LUMCON's educational research vessel for an interactive boat trip where they collected oceanographic data and biological samples. Students learned to use scientific instruments to monitor water quality, study marine life, and understand coastal ecosystems in real-time.

The second activity, a guided marsh walk, introduced students to essential field sampling techniques in wetland environments. Students collected sediment and plant samples, practiced species identification, and gained practical skills in environmental data collection.

The trip reinforced Southern University's commitment to experiential learning and workforce development in the environmental sciences. By engaging with Louisiana's unique coastal landscapes, students broadened their STEM competencies and explored future careers in marine biology, coastal restoration, and environmental sustainability.



# Southern University and Grambling State Collaborate at Water Campus for Coastal Education Initiative



CAHES students and faculty members, Drs. Crystal Vance and Jacqueline McComb joined forces with Grambling State University for a collaborative educational experience at Baton Rouge's Water Campus. The event was part of the Mississippi River Delta Transition Initiative (MissDelta), a multi-institutional effort to advance coastal resilience, environmental stewardship, and STEM engagement across Louisiana.

During the visit, participants toured LSU's Center for River Studies, home to one of the world's largest movable physical river models. Students witnessed dynamic demonstrations of how the Mississippi River behaves and how sediment diversions are used to combat land loss along the Louisiana coast. The experience offered a deeper understanding of river systems and their critical role in shaping the delta.

The group also visited The Water Institute, a leading research organization dedicated to coastal and deltaic science. There, students engaged with scientists and professionals who shared insights into ongoing research projects and careers in environmental sustainability and coastal restoration.

This cross-university initiative not only strengthened academic ties but also provided students with a front-row seat to the science and innovation shaping the future of Louisiana's coastline.





# College of Agricultural, Human and Environmental Sciences Empowers Students Through Coastal Science



CAHES faculty Drs. Jacqueline McComb and Crystal Vance, and student Nickolas Lawrence actively contributed to the Mississippi River Delta Transition Initiative (MissDelta) by participating in the 2025 Eva Legard Field Trip. This initiative aimed to foster coastal and environmental stewardship, enhanced STEM engagement, and showcased career opportunities in coastal sciences and environmental sustainability.

MissDelta is a \$22 million, five-year research effort involving 38 coastal scholars from 14 institutions, including Southern University. The initiative seeks to address the Mississippi River Delta's challenges, such as land loss, rising sea levels, and ecological degradation. Southern University's involvement underscores its commitment to environmental research and education.

The Eva Legard Center for Coastal and Environmental Studies, known for its STEM-focused curriculum and partnership with LSU, provides students with hands-on experiences in environmental science. The 2025 field trip allowed students to engage directly with coastal ecosystems, participate in scientific investigations, and explore potential careers in

environmental sustainability.

Through this collaboration, Southern University faculty and students contribute to vital research and inspire the next generation of scientists and environmental stewards. Their participation in the MissDelta initiative exemplifies the university's dedication to addressing pressing environmental issues and promoting diversity in STEM fields.





# Growing Success: Highlights from the Latest SNAP-Ed Gardening Season



The Fall 2024 gardening season was a dynamic and impactful period for the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education team, with gardens thriving across Louisiana. From container gardens supporting senior citizens in Avoyelles Parish to elementary students in East Baton Rouge Parish cultivating and cooking mustard greens, and seniors in West Carroll Parish uniting to establish a community garden, the season showcased the power of gardening in fostering nutrition, education, and community engagement. Here are some key highlights from this fall's initiatives across the state.

## Highlighting Container Gardens with Seniors in Avoyelles Parish

Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center's Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Nutrition Educator Supervisor, and Educator, Camellia Brown, finds one of the most rewarding activities with her senior participants to be creating container gardens.

Through the SNAP-Ed Growing Healthy Garden Program, Brown implemented container gardens for seniors at Counseling on Aging Centers in Marksville, Mansura, Simmesport, Cottonport, Bunkie, Moreauville, and Hessimer, La. These gardens hold a special place in her heart for several reasons. They provide seniors with something personal that they can take care of. By growing their own herbs, participants not only experience the satisfaction of watching their plants thrive but also develop a deeper connection to the food they prepare. These fresh herbs enhance their meals, to promote healthier eating habits, and to add a sense of accomplishment to their daily routines.



What makes the container gardens even more meaningful is their accessibility. For seniors who may struggle with bending or physically managing a traditional garden, the containers are placed at a comfortable height on tables, allowing for easy care without strain. This thoughtful setup ensures that gardening remains an enjoyable and therapeutic activity rather than a challenge.

Brown is deeply moved by the joy these gardens bring to the seniors. They eagerly share updates, sending her pictures of their growing plants and expressing excitement as they incorporate fresh herbs into their cooking. Many proudly send photos of their prepared dishes, showcasing the ingredients they have grown themselves. For Camellia Brown, these moments serve as a beautiful reminder of how something as simple as a container garden can positively impact the lives of seniors, fostering connection, well-being, and a renewed sense of purpose.

For more information contact Joshua McDonald at [joshua\\_mcdonald@suagcenter.com](mailto:joshua_mcdonald@suagcenter.com), Stephanie Elwood at [stephanie\\_elwood@suagcenter.com](mailto:stephanie_elwood@suagcenter.com), or Camellia Brown at [camellia\\_brown@suagcenter.com](mailto:camellia_brown@suagcenter.com).





## Growing Health and Knowledge at Glen Oaks Park Elementary School

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center's SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator for East Baton Rouge and East Feliciana Parishes, Christhana Thomas, played a key role in establishing a school garden at Glen Oaks Park Elementary in Baton Rouge. Her nutrition education lessons emphasize the importance of healthy eating and the benefits of growing your own food.

On December 11, 2024, Thomas invited the SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed team to Glen Oaks Park to assist students in harvesting a beautiful crop of full-sized mustard greens, collard greens, and kale from their school garden. After harvesting, approximately 60 students took part in cleaning, chopping, and cooking the greens as part of a hands-on learning experience.

The students had the opportunity to taste the greens once they were cooked down with seasoning and smoked meats – every single student enjoyed the tasting of the greens! The experience was even more meaningful since they had grown these vegetables themselves. This activity highlighted their dedication and hard work in maintaining the school garden.

Thanks to the continued support of the SU Ag Center's SNAP-Ed Growing Healthy Program, Glen Oaks Park Elementary has maintained a thriving school garden for the past three years. This collaborative effort has provided students with valuable hands-on experience in sustainable farming and the satisfaction of growing their own food. Through this initiative, students are not only learning about healthy eating but also





developing an understanding of sustainability, responsibility, and the rewards of their efforts in nurturing a garden.

For more information on this program email, [chrishana\\_thomas@suagcenter.com](mailto:chrishana_thomas@suagcenter.com), [stephanie\\_elwood@suagcenter.com](mailto:stephanie_elwood@suagcenter.com), or [joshua\\_mcdonald@suagcenter.com](mailto:joshua_mcdonald@suagcenter.com).

### **Bringing Health and Gardening Together at White Oaks Senior Community in North Louisiana**

White Oaks is an apartment complex in West Carroll Parish in the City of Oak Grove that serves elderly and disabled residents. In the spring of 2023, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center's SNAP-Ed Nutrition team, consisting of Carolyn Robinson, Area Agent and Theresa Sammons, Nutrition Educator Assistant, installed two small, raised garden beds at White Oaks Apartments, utilizing corrugated metal enclosures designed for small bed gardens.

For the spring of 2024, donated tomato plants were planted in these beds. In early fall of 2024, SNAP-Ed gardening funds were used to purchase two larger raised beds, along with seeds and plants. With assistance from White Oaks residents, collards, mustard greens, turnips, and additional tomato plants were planted for the fall season. The residents actively participated in the process and planted onions they had donated themselves.

As one of the sites for monthly SNAP-Ed nutrition education programming, White Oaks provided an opportunity to closely monitor the gardens progress. The garden flourished, with approximately 20 residents ensuring the plants were well-watered and properly maintained. They eagerly anticipated each visit to showcase the garden's progress. Once the turnips reached maturity, they were harvested and used to prepare a hearty, nutritious soup as part of a food demonstration. The residents enjoyed both the demonstration and the meal. The gardening initiative proved to be a positive and engaging experience, and the residents look forward to planting again in the upcoming year.

For more information on this program email, [theresa\\_sammons@suagcenter.com](mailto:theresa_sammons@suagcenter.com); [stephanie\\_elwood@suagcenter.com](mailto:stephanie_elwood@suagcenter.com), or [joshua\\_mcdonald@suagcenter.com](mailto:joshua_mcdonald@suagcenter.com).





# Dr. LaShunda Anderson Hodges and Antonio Dyson Participate in American Farmland Trust's Advanced Soil Health Training Program



Dr. LaShunda Anderson Hodges, SU Ag Center and CAHES Research Professor, and Antonio Dyson, a freshman majoring in Soil and Plant Sciences, were among the latest participants in the prestigious Advanced Soil Health Training (ASHT) Program offered by the American Farmland Trust (AFT) held on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, N. C. The ASHT program, supported by the USDA through the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities (PCSC) program, aims to equip farmers, researchers, and soil health advisors with the knowledge to enhance soil health management and adopt sustainable agricultural practices.

The training provided students with hands-on experience and invaluable mentorship from AFT's network of soil health experts. Dyson's participation reflected the growing interest among young scholars in tackling soil health conservation through innovative farming practices.

The ASHT program deepened the knowledge of a cohort of experienced farmers, farm advisors, students, and soil health professionals by combining soil health academic instruction with on-site visits to demonstration farms. Participants explored practical soil management strategies that improve long-term sustainability, natural disaster resilience, and productivity. Key topics include troubleshooting soil health practices, effective communication about their adoption, and how to develop and implement soil health plans in the community.

"I am excited Dr. Hodges and Mr. Dyson were members of this year's soil health training cohort," said Dr. Courtney Owens, AFT South Regional Director. "Their engagement in this soil health and environmental stewardship program will benefit Louisiana's communities by providing additional tools for contributing to research in mitigating natural disaster soil health remediation."

The American Farmland Trust is a leading national organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and supporting farmers. Through programs like the Advanced Soil Health Training, AFT advances natural disaster soil health agricultural solutions that benefit farmers, the environment, and future generations.





# SU Ag Center Employees Participated in the East Baton Rouge Parish Schools STEM Challenge

*Integrated:*



Drs. Raquel Ayles and Dana Pollard, employees of the SU Ag Center, served as judges for the 2025 East Baton Rouge Parish Schools Spring STEM Challenge: Finders Keepers: Louisiana's Natural Resources Project Pitch Day on March 21, 2025. During the event, schools planned and assembled a Rube Goldberg machine and associated its design with a natural aspect of the state of Louisiana. The students presented project pitch presentations and were evaluated by Drs. Ayles and Pollard along with three additional judges from East Baton Rouge Parish.

The following schools participated in the challenge:

## **Kindergarten – 2nd Grade**

- Glen Oaks Park Elementary School and The Dufrocq School

## **3th Grade – 5th Grade**

- Capital Elementary School, Glen Oaks Park Elementary School, Sharon Hills Elementary School, and The Dufrocq School

## **6th – 8th Grade**

- Westdale Middle School

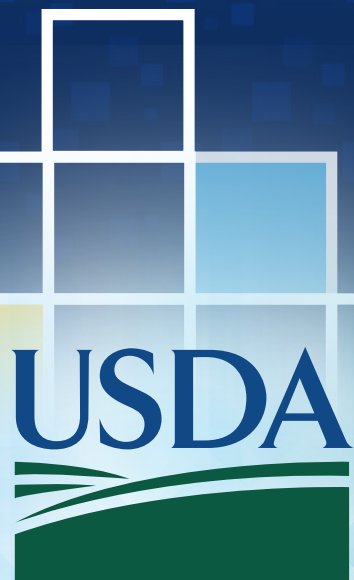
## **9th-12th Grade**

- Woodlawn High School





# The USDA Nutrition Hub Provides Nutrition Education to Southern University and the Local Community



USDA Nutrition Hub  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

To commemorate Nutrition Month, March 2025, the USDA Nutrition Hub student intern, Joi Ector, dedicated her time and hands-on talent to the Southern University community garden. Joi enjoyed working the garden and was excited about contributing to the growth of produce and being an active participant in creating healthier options for the public.

The USDA Nutrition Hub kicked off Nutrition Month by feeding and educating Southern University students on March 5, 2025. Dr. Joynetta Bell Kelly, USDA Nutrition Hub Director and Nutrition and Health Outreach Specialist, worked with Alexis Motley, Dietetic Internship Director and Instructor, and SU Dietetic Interns to prepare food for the pantries on campus and at a local community church. The food pantry's mission is to feed the hungry and ensure that food access is attainable to all, regardless of the lack of resources financially and geographically on college campuses and within the community.

The USDA Nutrition Hub was actively involved in the advancement of research, and innovation of food products. Under the partnering leadership of Drs. Kelly, Fatemeh Malekian, and Gabriela Rodriguez, a passion fruit-tasting session was held on March 21, 2025. The purpose of the tasting session was to test flavor profiles that will work best for an innovative, delicious, and nutritious smoothie, which will soon be introduced. Approximately 20 students, faculty, and staff tasted the smoothie, completed a survey, and gave feedback that will complement the development of the research department's passion fruit protein smoothie. The group also participated in a research project that is being led by the USDA Nutrition Hub and the Ag Center's research staff. The research study explores how a person's waist circumference may be a precursor for type II diabetes and prediabetes.





The USDA Nutrition Hub and the Dietetic Program, led by Alexis Motley, also co-hosted a Healthy Bowl cook-off and education session for the Southern University Women's Soccer Team on March 21, 2025. The players were educated on the importance of balancing meals, fueling their bodies for optimal athletic performance, and sustaining a healthy lifestyle long after their college days. Drs. Kelly, Motley, and dietetic interns introduced "create your own" bowls complete with protein, vegetables, healthy carbohydrates, and tasty garnishes.

On March 22, 2025, the USDA Nutrition Hub and the SU Ag Center's Mobile Technology Center participated in WellAhead Louisiana's Health Fair at the Intramural Center on the Southern University Baton Campus. Dr. Bell Kelly, Dr. Malekian, and William Augustine educated participants about healthy food choices, food moderation, partnership building, and research and innovation projects underway within the USDA Nutrition Hub.

Dr. Bell Kelly was a panelist on the National Coalition of 100 Black Women's Nutrition and Health podcast on March 27, 2025. During the podcast, Dr. Bell Kelly introduced the Nutrition Hub and its five-pillar program of feeding, growing, healing, advancing, and sustaining. On April 3, 2025, in addition to the podcast, Dr. Bell Kelly appeared on Louisiana First News Now Fox 44/ NBC 33, to promote the Bee Healthy 100 Community Health Fair which the Nutrition Hub co-hosted with the National Coalition of 100 Black Women to end food insecurity and educate the public on health, wellness, and chronic disease prevention.

On March 29, 2025, Dr. Bell Kelly participated in the Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church Kidney Screening Day hosted at the ExxonMobil YMCA. After participants were screened for kidney disease, neurological abnormalities, and diabetes, Dr. Bell Kelly used life-like food models to properly educate participants on how to "build a healthy plate." In addition, Dr. Bell Kelly helped participants understand that unhealthy choices should be consumed in moderation and balanced with lots of water and physical activity to potentially decrease negative metabolic impact.

For additional information on the USDA Nutrition Hub visit, <https://www.suagcenter.com/page/usda-nutrition-hub>, or email [joynetta\\_kelly@suagcenter.com](mailto:joynetta_kelly@suagcenter.com).





**SU Ag Center and  
the USDA Nutrition  
Hub Co-Hosts the  
Bee Healthy 100  
Community Health  
Fair with the National  
Coalition of 100 Black  
Women, Inc.**



The SU Ag Center, USDA Nutrition Hub, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metropolitan Baton Rouge Chapter hosted the Bee Healthy 100 Community Health Fair on April 5, 2025 in the Felton G. Clark Activity Center on Southern University's campus.

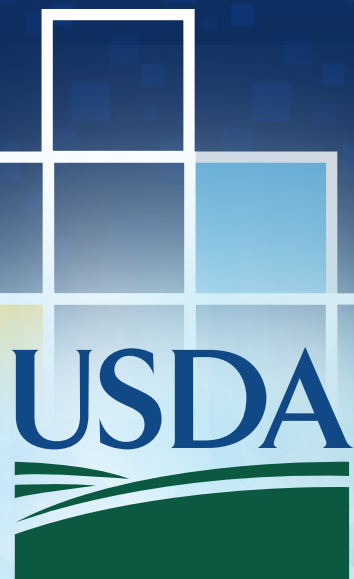
Over 80 vendors focused on mental health, spiritual and physical health, and nutrition were on hand to offer resources, health screenings, prizes, and hearty food options to participants.

The SU Ag Center's Nutrition Hub and SNAP-Ed program shared information on how to eat healthy and collected surveys during the health fair, which also included several panel discussions and presentations for the community.

Topics covered during the discussions included Gentle with our Mental: Mental Health panel, Empowering our moms: Black Maternal Health Panel, and USDA Nutrition Hub with Southern University Ag Center.

Dr. Fatemeh Malekian presented information on the Nutrition Hub. Dr. Gabriela Rodriguez interacted with participants, collected surveys, measured their stomach circumferences, and shared information about the Nutrition Hub at Southern University Ag Center.

For additional information on the USDA Nutrition Hub visit, <https://www.suagcenter.com/page/usda-nutrition-hub>.



**USDA Nutrition Hub**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# Tower Garden Brings Fresh Learning to SU Child Development Lab



The 1890 Center of Excellence proudly donated a Tower Garden to the Southern University Child Development Lab, bringing hands-on learning and fresh produce directly to young learners! This vertical hydroponic system is transforming classrooms into living laboratories where children explore science, sustainability, and nutrition in real time.

As part of the initiative, the staff received training on the Tower Garden from SU Ag Center staff members Cornelius Jackson, Stephanie Elwood, and Yasmyne Wells. With their support, the children began an exciting journey into:

- **Plant Life Cycles** – Observing the fascinating journey from seed to harvest.
- **Sustainability & Nutrition** – Making healthy food choices.
- **STEM Concepts** – Participating in hands-on science through planting and care.
- **Farm-to-Table Learning** – Enjoying the taste of fresh, classroom-grown produce.

To jumpstart the garden, Professor Elwood cultivated Butter Crunch lettuce, arugula, and a lettuce mix in the greenhouse. She generously donated Butter Crunch and Romaine lettuce for

the Tower Garden.

In just one month, the garden was thriving! Student Scholar Chasity Joseph led a harvest alongside some of the Little Jags. The Tower Garden yielded approximately 4 pounds of fresh lettuce!

This set the stage for a fun, educational experience. Students participated in a nutrition education lesson featuring:

- **Hydroponic gardening**
- **Lettuce facts**
- **The letter “L”**
- **A hands-on food demonstration**

Each child received an educational packet and had the chance to assemble and taste their own lettuce wraps. The remaining lettuce will be used for meals and snacks.

Special thanks to the SU Child Development Lab for their ongoing collaboration and generous support. This initiative not only delivered fresh greens—it sowed the seeds of early nutrition education, sustainability, and lifelong learning.

Together, we’re helping our children grow—inside and out!





# Faculty & Staff Highlight

**Dr. Renita Marshall  
Appointed to  
the University  
of Texas at Tyler  
Regional Advisory  
Committee**



**Dr. Renita Woods Marshal, Vice Chancellor for Academics and Student Support Services and Associate Dean at Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, has been appointed to the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) at the University of Texas at Tyler.**

**The Regional Advisory Committee is a diverse group that utilizes members' experiences and skill sets to counsel and assist principal investigators and staff. Advisors come from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Iowa, and Texas. The multidisciplinary group represents dairy, forestry, logging, commercial fishing, public health, engineering, health literacy, industrial hygiene, education, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and veterinary medicine.**





# SU AG PODCAST

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

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

*Hosted by:*

**Dexter "Dex" Newman**



**LISTEN TO THE EPISODE AT:**  
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# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

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