



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

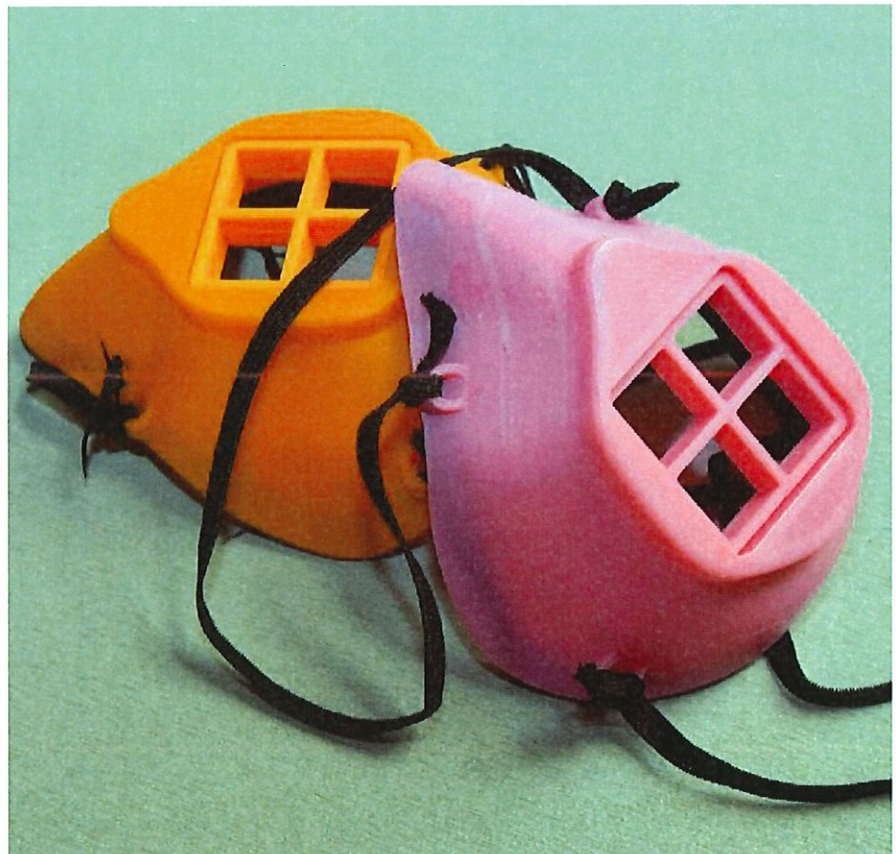
May/June 2020

"We Are Southern"

Report No. 8

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College of Sciences and Engineering staff and students are currently running a full lab of 3-D printers to make washable and reusable masks for healthcare professionals.

Responding to COVID-19: Adjusting to a New Normal

Since March 18, 2020, Southern University and A&M College made adjustments regarding course delivery for students while the city, state and nation battled the pandemic, COVID-19. The university mandated that most of its employees telecommute as it continued to keep its doors opened and help to reduce the spread of the virus.

At the urging of the Southern University System, the university also developed an emergency grading policy for Spring 2020 and agreed to offer summer classes online from June 8

through July 30, 2020. The regular grading scale was offered to students as well as a new "pass" option for the spring of 2020.

"While we are hopeful that the COVID-19 outbreak is over sooner than later, we have a duty to continue to offer accessible, quality classes to our students while ensuring everyone's health and safety," said Ray L. Belton, president of the Southern University System and chancellor of Southern University Baton Rouge.

To prepare for the summer term, virtual Recruitment Sessions were scheduled. In addition, Quality Matters training was provided for faculty in May and will be provided during the summer and fall.

Southern University students also benefitted from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress which included the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund-IHE/ Student Aid. Southern University allocated Emergency Financial Aid Grants to undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the Spring 2020 term to address the pressing financial needs of students due to the disruption of campus operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Southern University Division of Student Affairs, Southern University System Foundation and Southern University Alumni Federation raised funds to assist students who had difficulty transitioning from residential housing to their homes during the pandemic. This emergency fund provided nominal assistance such as gas money for students to travel home.

"We understand that there are many moving parts in this uncertain time as we face a global coronavirus pandemic," noted a Student Affairs official in the materials sent to students. "We realize that this is not an easy feat for some students.

The University is in the process of preparing for a combined Spring/Summer 2020 Commencement Exercise on August 7, 2020.



Southern University (SU), Southern University System Foundation, SU Alumni Federation partnered to help on-campus students transition amid coronavirus.

Professors Making Headway with COVID-19 Research

As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to have a strong hold on the nation, two Southern University professors are working on research that could benefit millions. Babu Bassa, an environmental toxicology adjunct professor, and Rao Uppu, James and Ruth Smith Endowed professor of chemistry and environmental toxicology, have identified two blocks of amino acid sequences that are universally present in an identical form in 150 coronavirus isolates that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The research is being performed in collaboration with Olen Brown, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center in Columbia, Missouri.

“A major contribution of the study to coronavirus research is that the alignment-free computer program

developed by the SU-UM researchers, unlike most programs currently being used by others, can significantly aid in identifying sequence homologies between the novel SARS CoV-2 and the older SARS viruses,” said Robert Miller, dean emeritus of sciences at Southern.

Uppo said the information is critical to addressing the present as well as probable future outbreaks of SARS. This includes COVID-19, the virus from the 2003 SARS outbreak, and other SARS-like strains. The work is ongoing to develop short- and long-term treatment options for COVID-19 through design and identification of therapeutic peptides and vaccine candidates.

Part of the researchers' work has been published this month in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, “Frontiers in Bioscience.”



Southern University Leaders Named to Governor's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force

Gov. John Bel Edwards appointed Sandra Brown, dean of the Southern University College of Nursing and Allied Health, as co-chair of the Louisiana COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force. She joins Dr. Thomas LaVeist, dean of Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, in leading the array of health and educational professionals, and community leaders. President-Chancellor Ray L. Belton and Chief of Staff Katara Williams were appointed as part of the task force's administration along with Chancellor Orlando McMeans, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center; Dr. Rani G. Whitfield, Southern University System board member; Deleso A. Alford, Southern University Law Center; and Dean Damien Ejigiri, of the Nelson Mandela School of Government and Social Sciences.

Southern Graduates Honored by President Obama, More in Virtual Ceremony

The Southern University graduating Class of 2020 were honored virtually by an all-star line-up, including former U.S. President Barack Obama, on Saturday, May 16. The celebration, sponsored by JPMorgan Chase, honored the achievements of more than 20,000 students from 78 Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

All campuses of the Southern University System, the only HBCU System in the nation, participated. Chancellors from each campus — Southern University Baton Rouge, Southern University at New Orleans, Southern University Shreveport and Southern University Law Center — were featured, giving words of encouragement to graduates.

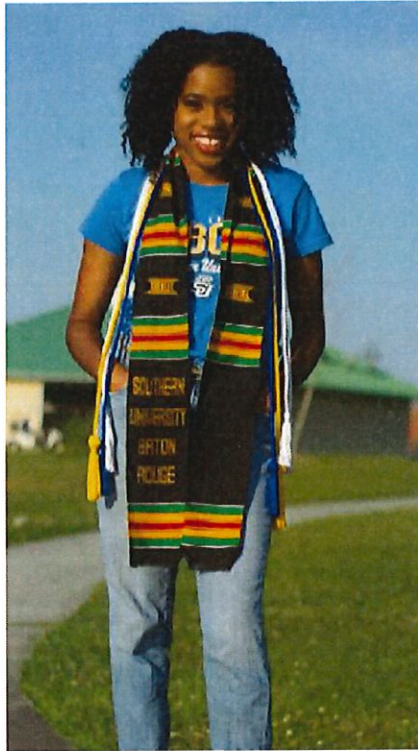
Remaining Steadfast and Resilient, Irene L. Lewis Graduates Top of Her Class

Irene L. Lewis reads her favorite scripture from the Bible, Micah 6:8, for a constant reminder: “The Lord has told you what is good, and this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” She is now the top of her graduating class with a 3.9 GPA and has the coveted title of chief student marshal for the Spring 2020 Graduating Class.

Lewis, a native of Central, Louisiana, is graduating with a bachelor’s degree in agricultural sciences with a focus on soil science. Since her first day at Southern, her goal was to become chief student marshal but the college experience was much more than grades.

“It is about the people you meet and the memories you make,” Lewis said about her experience at Southern.

Lewis, who was a student in the Delores Margaret Richard Spikes



Honors College, has been active in several organizations, including the Southern University chapter and national chapter. She was also

named a U.S. Department of Agriculture Scholar, 2016-2020. Lewis, 22, has interned at the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation and participated in the Summer Research Opportunities Program at Ohio State University. This summer, she will spend the summer as an intern at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, utilizing her skills in public policy.

This fall, Lewis will begin her studies for the Master of Public Administration at Ohio State University. She has the opportunity to complete her second year of studies while working in Washington D.C. on a fully funded fellowship.

“Some of us don’t know our next move and some of us have had to make some major adjustments.” Lewis said. “I am honored to serve as chief student marshal to remind the Class of 2020 that we are resilient. We deserve this time to be seen, to be celebrated, and to enjoy every piece of this success.”

Southern Teams Up with Food Bank and Others to Feed 1,800

Southern University (SU), teamed up with local officials and the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank to assist families and individuals in need. Volunteers, equipped with 1,800 boxes of food, will provide them with enough to feed a family of four. Masks, hand sanitizer and other protective materials will also be distributed while supplies last. Others collaborating on this project were SU Ag Center, SU Alumni Federation Home Chapter, Baton Rouge Sigma Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Alafia Healthcare, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, and EBR Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome.



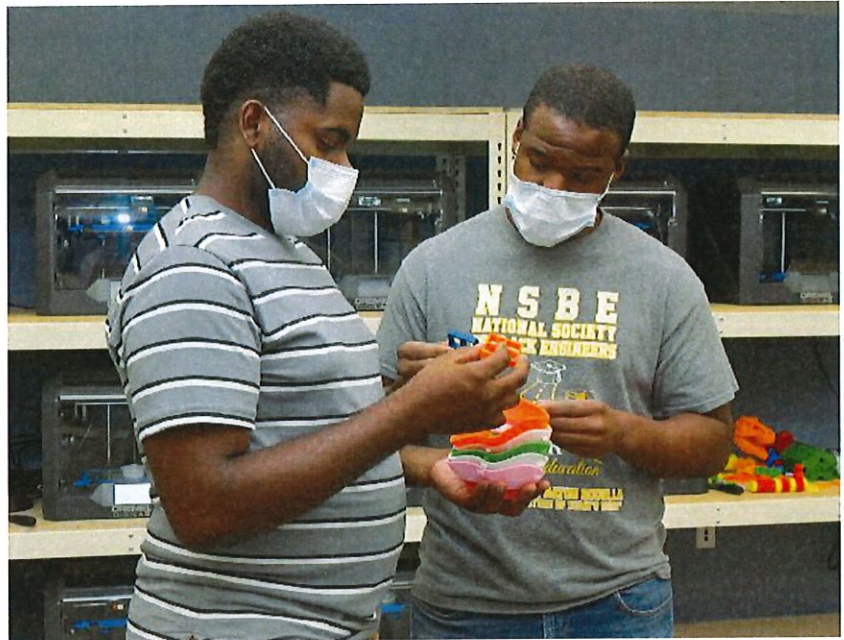
College of Sciences and Engineering Produces 3-D Masks for Healthcare Professionals in Response to COVID-19

The Southern University College of Sciences and Engineering ventured into familiar territory to help combat a still unfamiliar disease continuing to affect a global community. Staff and students are currently running a full lab of 3-D printers in their Entergy-sponsored lab to manufacture parts for reusable masks to be used by healthcare professionals treating patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I saw an article on Facebook talking about people using 3-D printing for masks," said Jason Chang, director of information technology at the College. "I said, 'We (Southern) can really help our community.'"

According to Chang, the lab in the P.B.S. Pinchback building, houses the most 3-D printers in a central location at an educational institution in Louisiana. The lab has 40 desktop-sized for smaller jobs and one commercial-scale printer for intricate or larger jobs. Presently, Chang and his team have produced nearly 2,000 masks.

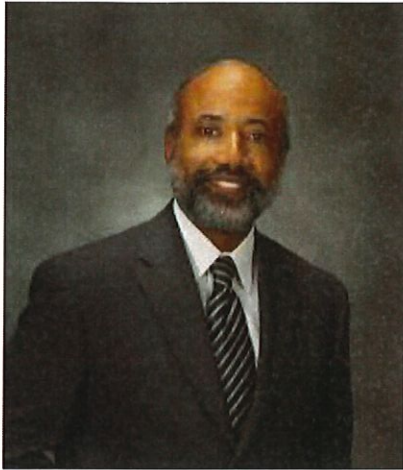
The 3-D printers generate accurate representations of parts designed in several industry-standard software programs such as SolidWorks and AutoCAD. The lab and all materials in it, including those to make the reusable masks, were made possible by a \$2 million grant Energy presented to the university in 2018. The gift was matched by Gov. John Bel Edwards for a total of \$4 million to strengthen STEM disciplines and to upgrade facilities. Stratasys, a global 3-D printing and additive solutions company, also recently donated \$7,000 worth of filament casters.



The masks, which are worn by loops that fit over the ears, are made of plastic with a place for a special filter. For comfort, the inside of the mask has a cushion for the wearer's face.



Since the masks are washable and easy to dry, healthcare professionals do not have to dispose of multiple masks when they come into contact with patients who have COVID-19, and are trying to protect other patients and themselves from infection.



College of Business Dean Named to Mayor's Group to Safely Reopen East Baton Rouge Parish

Donald Andrews, dean of the College of Business, was recently named to Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome's Business Roundtable Economic Recovery Working Group, part of the mayor-president's Restart BR initiative. The working group is focused on facilitating the responsible reopening of business activity in East Baton Rouge Parish and creating a strategy for repositioning industries, businesses and the work force in the post-COVID-19 economy.

The working group is directed by Mayor-President Broome and co-chairs Jim Bernhard, Bernhard Capital Partners co-founder and partner; and Erin Monroe Wesley, Cox Southeast Vice President of Government and Public Affairs.

College of Business Wins Nunn-Perry Award

The College of Business was selected as one of the Department of Defense (DOD) fiscal year 2019 Nunn-Perry Award winners for its Global Resource Solutions, Advanced Decision Vectors Initiative.

The award was part of the agency's effort to recognize excellence in the DOD Mentor Protégé Program.

The DOD Mentor Protégé Program was established Nov. 5, 1990, in response to concerns

raised by DOD prime contractors regarding their inability to meet Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) subcontracting goals. At the time, many SDBs lacked the technical capabilities to meet DOD subcontract requirements.

The award is named for the contributions of Senator Sam Nunn and former Secretary of Defense William Perry, who both played critical roles in the implementation of the DOD Mentor Protégé Program.

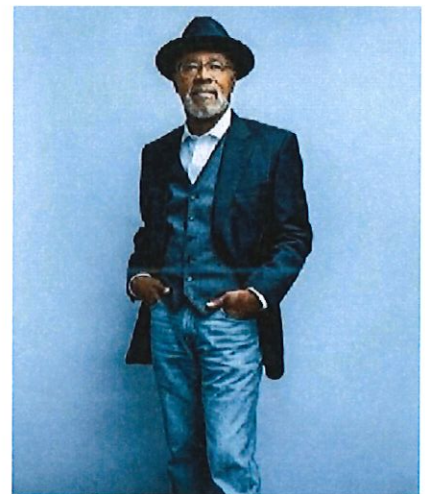
Faculty Member Awarded \$50,000 as Poet Laureate

John Smith, who teaches English in the College of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies, was selected recently as a Poet Laureate Fellow with the Academy of American Poets and will receive \$50,000.

He is one of 23 individuals selected to serve as Poets Laureate of states, cities, counties, and the Navajo Nation. Smith is Louisiana's first African-American male Poet Laureate.

He is the author of *Muhammad's Mountain* (Lavender Ink, 2018). A Cave Canem fellow, Smith has directed Education's Next Horizon.

As a fellow and in collaboration with the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and local schools, Smith will conduct youth poetry workshops in four under-resourced parishes in North East Louisiana. Through its Poets



Laureate Fellowship program, the Academy has become the largest financial supporter of poets in the nation. The fellowship program is made possible by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which, in January of this year, awarded the Academy \$4.5 million.

Smith earned his MFA at the University of New Orleans.