

Year in Review '10-'11

INSIDE

<i>SUNO #1 in campus safety again</i>	2
<i>Business incubator to be constructed</i>	2
<i>Volleyball completes impressive turnaround</i>	3
<i>Lady Knights break records in 2010-2011</i>	3
<i>University hosts inaugural GCAC outdoor track & field championship</i>	3
<i>Knight Vision</i>	4
<i>University receives outstanding SACS feedback</i>	4
<i>Technology goes up a notch on campus</i>	4

SUNO outlasts merger controversy

The Proposal

On January 18, 2011, Governor Bobby Jindal made a request of the Louisiana Board of Regents to study the feasibility of merging Southern University at New Orleans and the University of New Orleans and moving both institutions under the umbrella of the University of Louisiana System. Amid months of an energetic from SUNO and HBCU supporters as well as steady leadership from the Southern University System, public conversation about the merger persisted. On May 19th, Rep. Jim Tucker announced that he would remove SUNO from his bill, HB 537, thus putting an end to the merger debate of 2011. SUNO was subsequently removed from Sen. Conrad Appel's bill, SB 183.

The Warriors and the Strategy

Throughout the controversy, the University employed a myriad of strategies and relied on the assistance of several warriors. Working closely with the System's media relations team, SUNO served as foundation for the Support Our Southern campaign. The campaign created awareness of the importance of Southern University System and its member institutions to Louisiana's students as well as students from urban areas around the country. SUNO, in particular, benefited from external support from key legislators, particularly the Black Legislative Caucus, the state's Democratic Caucus, and a strong, vocal New Orleans-based ministerial alliance. Also instrumental in the lengthy battle were the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. Most importantly, the University's Faculty Senate, students, employees, alumni, and community supporters showed spirited support for New Orleans' only public HBCU.

HBCU family members from across the country also voiced their collective support for the University. SUNO Public Relations heavily utilized social networking to create national awareness about the merger proposal. Using Twitter (@SUNOKnights) and Facebook (SUNOKnights56), SUNO provided did-you-know facts about its post-Katrina accomplishments and its alumni's achievements. As a result, HBCU students, alumni, and supporters from around the country utilized the Twitter hash tag #SupportSUNO to rally support and urge state legislators to vote against the proposal once it reached the House floor. SUNO PR credits HBCUDigest.com for creating the pivotal hash tag.

The System and the University teamed up to accomplish three things—state the facts, promote SUNO's uniqueness, and work the legislators. President Ron Mason, Chairman Darren Mire, Chancellor Victor Ukpolo, and key legislators consistently explained the facts of the graduation rate formula and the unique role, scope, and mission of the University to the public. By virtue of the debate, the importance of the Southern University System was also discussed. At the same time, the System family held continuous conversations with legislators about how the absence of SUNO could adversely affect African-American and non-traditional degree seekers from Southeast Louisiana and beyond.

The Future

SUNO is preparing to play a more significant role in the higher education landscape. There are also several facility projects on the table including the new building for the College of Business & Public Administration, which is set to open Fall 2011, and an on-campus business incubator, in addition to other projects. As a sign of progress on the Park Campus, Clark Hall (the Education Building) is set for demolition and bids have been taken on renovation of the Leonard S. Washington Memorial Library. In addition, implementation of President Mason's proposal, "A Focused Learning Approach to Strengthen the Role of Public Higher Education in Building a Greater New Orleans: The Honoré Center for Undergraduate Student Achievement", is being explored.



SUS President Ron Mason addresses a New Orleans television station about the future of SUNO at the ribbon cutting for the University's Information Technology Center in March. Photo by Chauncy Phillips

SUNO #1 in campus safety again



SUNO's Chief of Police, Ira Thomas (r.) and Sgt. Albert Ernet (m.) talk to a community member at a University event. Photo by Eddie Francis

For the second year in a row, SUNO has been ranked #1 in campus safety with a 98.18 safety rating among Louisiana colleges and universities by StateUniversity.com. The University is ranked #19 in the U.S. by the web site, up from 20th in 2009. The campus safety report is based on incidents reported by campus safety officials.

SUNO recorded .38 burglaries and 2.27 larceny-theft incidents per 1,000 students. Other categories considered were aggravated assault, arson, forcible rape, murder, robbery and vehicle theft. According to StateUniversity.com "colleges and universities ranked for campus safety on a scale that accounts for severity of a crime as well as frequency of crime." SUNO is the highest ranked four-year HBCU in America.

"Of course, this is an honor, but it is also a clear indication that we are serious about our efforts to improve the quality of life throughout the University community," said Dr. Victor Ukpolo, Chancellor of SUNO. "I congratulate our campus police department on their work and the University community on their dedication to making Southern University at New Orleans a place where students can feel safe to attend classes, study, and excel."

SUNO's Chief of Police, Ira Thomas, says that reorganization of the SUNO Police Department, enhanced technology, and training for officers have all contributed to the University's continued progress. "We challenged our students, faculty, staff and community to work with us and become our partners in maintaining a safe campus and community and the response has been tremendous," said Thomas, who was hired at SUNO in September, 2009.

Business incubator to be constructed

The Louisiana Board of Regents at their June meeting in Baton Rouge approved SUNO's request to build a \$3 million on-campus business incubator. More than \$2 million of the funding for the building has been pre-approved by the U.S. Department of Education and comes from a special Title III -College Cost Reduction and Access Act Program. The incubator will be located on the Lake Campus, close to the new College of Business & Public Administration building which is near completion and should be occupied during in the fall.

The state-of-the-art facility is expected to be completed within two years and will allow for a seamless interaction between classroom education and real-world entrepreneurs. The facility will also serve as office space for entrepreneurs and will contain faculty and staff offices.

"We've all seen that New Orleans is serving as a model for entrepreneurship for the nation," said Dr. Victor Ukpolo. "This provides entrepreneurs with another prime opportunity to grow their businesses and achieve the American dream in their respective lives." The August 2009 issue of *Entrepreneur* magazine declared the New Orleans metropolitan area as one of the U.S. cities with the fastest growth in entrepreneurship.

SUNO officials expect the incubator to contribute greatly to the academic landscape of the University. "It will create an ideal environment for cross-disciplinary learning and entrepreneurial collaboration between business majors and students from other majors," said Dr. Igwe Udeh, Dean of the College of Business & Public Administration. Udeh specifically points to students' opportunities to start businesses in social service fields such as mental health, child protection, assisted living, daycare, adult literacy, inmate-to-society transition programs, chemical dependency education, and drug abuse counseling. SUNO is highly regarded for its social science programs, namely Social Work, Criminal Justice, and Substance Abuse Counseling.

The facility will also support the College of Business & Public Administration's accreditation plan by allowing the faculty to deliver more practical teaching, research excellence, community service, and meet other accreditation requirements as required by both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.



Rendering of the SUNO business incubator by Verges Rome Architects.

SUNO Volleyball completes impressive turnaround



Washington

SUNO was not supposed to win more than three matches in 2010. The inaugural volleyball season in 2009 was what most institutions experience with little-to-no wins as the Lady Knights went 1-18. But SUNO ended the 2010 season 10-13, nearly winning the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference crown. What made the mountain even steeper was an unexpected coaching change two days before the team's opening season match against the University of New Orleans.

On a September night at Xavier, however, SUNO put the rest of the conference on notice. Trailing at Xavier, the Lady Knights fought from a two-set deficit to win 3-2. The ladies took it several steps further by completing a four-match season sweep of Xavier, including two GCAC Tournament wins. Three days later, the Lady Knights traveled to Sherman, Texas to compete in the Austin College Classic where they defeated NCAA Division III opponent Sul Ross State.

The key to SUNO's season was their rookie coach, Naomi Washington. A former high school stand-out volleyball and basketball player, Washington experienced more success at perennial volleyball powerhouse, Long Beach State. She went on to gather professional experience as a member of USA Volleyball and Cala de Finestrat in Spain.

When asked how she began the process of turning SUNO Volleyball around, Washington stated the solution simply. "Discipline," she said. "Volleyball is a business for me. I tell them to leave all the personal stuff off the court. When you come in (the gym), it's about volleyball. It's about business. These girls don't quit, because I don't quit."

Lady Knights break records in 2010-2011

SUNO's women's basketball team finished the 2010-2011 season 18-5 and gathered fond memories along the way. Coming out to a blazing 12-0 start for the first time in their history, the Lady Knights set several other records along the way. They reached 16-0 before suffering their first loss of the season.

The first record came in the first game. In a November 2010 contest against Concordia College-Selma, SUNO set a record for fewest points allowed in a crushing 62-22 win. Later that month, the Lady Knights set a record for widest margin of victory in the school's history with a 86-26 win over Pensacola Christian College. Against PCC, SUNO also set a school record for fewest points allowed at halftime (10). Later in the season, they would set a record for most turnovers forced in a game (53) against Pensacola in Florida.

In their first conference game of the season, the Lady Knights continued the streak. Against Fisk in a December match-up, SUNO set records for most turnovers forced in a half with 38 and in a game with 50. SUNO also achieved a personal best of 30 steals in a game.

SUNO hosts inaugural GCAC outdoor track & field championship

With the help of sister campus Southern University, SUNO hosted the inaugural GCAC Outdoor Track & Field Championship. Held on April 22nd at A.W. Mumford Stadium in Baton Rouge, SUNO competed against Dillard University, Xavier University, and Edward Waters College.

Dillard topped the men's results with Edward Waters grabbing second place, SUNO taking third place, and Xavier getting fourth place. Xavier, however, edged Dillard out to win the women's category. Edward Waters received third place while SUNO placed fourth.

The Knights' results included: 100m dash—James Karl, 1st and Paul Blake, 2nd; 200m dash—Sheldon Williams, 1st and Peter McFarlane, 2nd; 400m dash—Norbert Miller, 1st, Williams, 2nd, and McFarlane, 3rd; 4x100 relay, 1st; 4x400 relay, 1st.

The Lady Knights' results included: 400m dash—Safia Jenkins, 2nd; 800m run—Monicah Jekemboi, 1st and Trudy-Ann Williams, 2nd; 1500m run—Jekemboi, 1st; 5000m run—Jekemboi, 1st and Rispha Sang, 3rd.

Coach Elston King's Lady Knights proved to be a record-breaking machine of underclassmen in the 2010-2011 basketball season.

2010-2011

HONOR ATHLETES

Men's Cross Country

- ★ Norbert Miller, All-GCAC

Women's Cross Country

- ★ Monicah Jekemboi, All-GCAC & National Qualifier
- ★ Trudy-Ann Williams, All-GCAC

Volleyball

- ★ Wynieka Anderson, All-GCAC
- ★ Veronica Azubuike, All-GCAC & GCAC Freshman of the Year
- ★ Ashley Cagle, 2011 Cum Laude Graduate
- ★ Gabrielle Carter, All-GCAC

Men's Basketball

- ★ Andre Davis, All-GCAC
- ★ Brent Leduff, All-GCAC, La. Sports Writers Assn. All-State (Honorable Mention) & NAIA All-American (Honorable Mention)
- ★ Ricardo Porter, All-GCAC

Women's Basketball

- ★ E. Derin Aras, 2011 Magna Cum Laude Graduate
- ★ Christine Conner, All-GCAC & NAIA All-American (Honorable Mention)
- ★ Lydia Ross, All-GCAC & GCAC Co-Freshman of the Year
- ★ LaTiondra Smith, All-GCAC

Men's Indoor Track & Field

- ★ 4x400 Relay, National Qualifier

Men's Outdoor Track & Field

- ★ Peter McFarlane, 200m National Qualifier
- ★ Norbert Miller, 400m & 400m hurdles National Qualifier
- ★ Sheldon Williams, 200m National Qualifier



Knight Vision

SUNO Alumni on the Move

Patrick Dobard '89 has been tapped to serve the Recovery School District (RSD) in the capacity of Deputy Superintendent for Community & Policy. In the role, he will be responsible for RSD's "policy agency, public process, communications and outreach efforts" according to a press release from RSD. Dobard received his master's degree in History from Southern University in '99.

Ashley Cagle '11 was selected to participate in a summer math teaching program in Los Angeles. There, she taught math to gifted middle and high school students as a part of a youth national youth enrichment program. The 2011 cum laude graduate has a shot at fall fellowships to either Clark Atlanta University or Tulane University. At CAU, Cagle would pursue her master's degree in math. At Tulane, she would have the opportunity to work toward becoming an M.D./Ph.D. Should she take the Tulane option, it will put her on track to getting her M.D. for dermatology and a Ph.D. in optical or biomedical engineering.

Victor Sims B'96, M'98 and **Terry Clay M'92** teamed up to make an impressive showing on WQUE-FM's "Real Talk" to provide valuable insight about crime in New Orleans. Clay brought significant depth to the conversation with his analysis of how people who live lives of crime are addicted the lifestyle. Sims used his knowledge and experience of working with people with aggressive behaviors as a foundation for his commentary. Sims is also a monthly contributor to "Sunday Journal" on WYLD-FM.

SUNO receives outstanding feedback from SACS

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) held its on-site visit of SUNO from March 2nd through 4th, 2011. The on-site committee report, which the University just received on May 5th, indicates that SUNO is in compliance with all SACS standards with no recommendations for corrective action.

"I commend our team for a job well done in showing our commitment to academic excellence and accountability," said Dr. Victor Ukpolo, who has served on SACS review teams. "To have complied with all 89 standards, including the core requirements, speaks volumes of our efforts at SUNO."

The SACSCOC on-site report commented on the University's hospitality, and noted that SUNO "has made a remarkable recovery since the Katrina disaster. A major commitment has been made to ensure that the quality of course offerings, the teaching/learning processes and students' engagement in learning were sustained at a competitive level during the post-Katrina period."

Dr. Ron Mason, the President of the Southern University System, expressed with satisfaction, "This is a remarkable feat. It is rare in higher education for any institution, even with all its facilities intact, to 'pitch a perfect game' by meeting all of the 89 SACS standards with no recommendations. Dr. Ukpolo and this team of administrators, faculty, staff and students deserve the highest commendation for attaining this achievement even while living with the severe devastation of Katrina."

The findings of the visiting committee represent a preliminary assessment of the institution at this time, and final action on the report rests with the Commission on Colleges. The final reaffirmation confirmation is anticipated by the SACS Commission on Colleges in December. A copy of the entire report can be obtained from the institution.

Technology goes up a notch at SUNO

SUNO has become a 100 percent wireless and has implemented cloud computing during the Summer 2011 session. The University also announced that each incoming freshman who qualifies for the Louisiana Board of Regents regional minimum admission standards and without a personal laptop will have access to a laptop upon arrival. SUNO implemented selective admission criteria mandated by the Board of Regents in Fall 2010.

"Part of the focus of both our Strategic Plan as well as our Quality Enhancement Plan is to enhance SUNO's technological resources, and this is a step in the right direction," said Dr. Ukpolo. "This is a big step in our providing SUNO students with a critical service. Considering that many of our students come from homes that are not wired with internet access, we believe that this is a down payment on their college success."

Cloud computing has been heavily advertised across the nation recently. "Cloud computing is the practice of using a network of remote servers hosted on the internet to store, manage and process data, rather than a local server or personal computer," according to Edmond Cummings, Director of SUNO's Information Technology Center.

"I love it," said Eugenie Tobin, SUNO's 2010-2011 Student Government Association President. "It's exciting to know that we're providing this kind of technological access to incoming freshmen. I love the fact that we have this to offer students, and SUNO is still the most cost-effective college option in the state."



Boudy

The importance of SUNO's technology strides cannot be emphasized enough, according to Chris Boudy, co-founder of NewOrleansTech.net and a 2008 graduate of SUNO. Boudy, who is a rising star on the New Orleans technology scene, estimates that possibly 30 to 40 per cent of homes in New Orleans do not have internet access. "Having a campus that's 100% wi-fi and with cloud computing means students will be able to access Blackboard, do research, do homework, chat with fellow students, and communicate with professors much more conveniently. This in addition to freshmen having access to laptops is an awesome step for my alma mater and great particularly for the types of students that SUNO serves," he said.