



# CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

## MARCH 2025

### PATHWAY TO KNIGHTHOOD

ENROLLMENT



RETENTION



GRADUATION



PERSISTENCE



GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL  
STUDIES/PLACEMENT



# A MESSAGE FROM CHANCELLOR AMMONS

It is with great pride and anticipation that I present the March 2025 Chancellor's Report to the Southern University and A&M College System Board of Supervisors. As we embark on a *pathway to knighthood*, I am reminded of our unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation. Our journey toward becoming a premier urban laboratory university is not only a vision but a tangible reality in the making.

At SUNO, our strategic initiatives are firmly anchored in the vibrant cultural and intellectual landscape of New Orleans. Our deep-rooted stake in the city is reflected in every partnership we forge, every community-based project we undertake, and every groundbreaking idea that emerges from our dynamic campus. New Orleans is not merely our home; it is an essential collaborator in our mission to integrate academic rigor with urban vibrancy.

This report details our progress in harnessing the unique opportunities presented by our urban setting—transforming challenges into learning experiences and cultivating an environment where innovation thrives. Our commitment to research, public engagement, and academic excellence continues to position SUNO at the forefront of transformative education.

I invite you to explore the pages ahead, which chronicle our collective achievements and outline the exciting pathways that lie ahead. Together, we are charting a course for a future where SUNO is recognized not only as a beacon of knowledge and discovery but as a pivotal force in shaping the future of New Orleans.

Welcome to the future of SUNO.

With kind regards,  
*James H. Ammons, Jr., Ph.D.*  
*Chancellor, Southern University at New Orleans*





# *In the Know* AT SUNO

## FERRIDAY HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS TOUR

SUNO rolled out the red carpet for nearly 15 graduating seniors for Ferriday High School's campus tour. Traveling more than 140 miles for their visit, the young scholars engaged with SUNO's amazing faculty, staff, and student leaders. And to top it all off, they cheered like champions at the basketball showdown where the Knights faced off against Xavier University!



# MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM



## McNair Scholars at SUNO Excel at 2025 Symposium

McNair Scholars Nyles Dillings, Nickolus Harrison, Asyah Lewis, Teeshell Lawrence, and Alisha Simms exemplified the program's mission by pursuing research and graduate education as envisioned by Dr. Ammons. Representing Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) at the 2025 McNair Symposium at North Carolina A&T from January 24-26, they actively engaged in networking with faculty, graduate program representatives, and peers from across the country.

Through workshops, panel discussions, and one-on-one meetings, these scholars gained valuable insights into prospective graduate schools, funding opportunities, and career pathways aligned with their research interests. Their professionalism and curiosity underscored SUNO's commitment to academic excellence and the core values of the McNair Scholars Program.

By diligently exploring advanced degree options and building strategic connections, Nyles, Nickolus, Asyah, Teeshell, and Alisha positioned themselves for success beyond SUNO. Their achievements serve as an inspiration for current and future McNair Scholars, demonstrating how engagement and perseverance can pave the way for advanced academic and professional pursuits.



SUNO Senior Nickolus Harrison has demonstrated unwavering dedication, perseverance, and academic excellence by earning acceptance to Columbia University, Tulane University, LSU, and SUNO. Achieving a flawless 4.0 GPA is a testament to his disciplined work ethic and commitment to his studies. Nickolus's intellectual curiosity and passion for learning have distinguished him as a standout scholar—a shining example of what can be achieved through hard work and persistence.

Mr. Harrison recently had a proposal accepted for an advanced clinical continuing education workshop at the National Association of Social Workers – Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference. This prestigious conference will take place in mid-March in Baton Rouge.



# SUNO FRIENDSHIP BENCH

## Friendship Bench NOLA: A New Chapter in Community Engagement

In a recent update, SUNO is proud to share a glimpse into our emerging Friendship Bench NOLA initiative—a project set to redefine community support within our School of Social Work. Although not prominently featured in the spotlight, a recent CBS clip captures a pivotal moment in our journey. At 4:17 in the film, viewers can see SUNO's early engagement in the initiative, with key figures including Board Member Maple Gaines and Dr. Clyde Robertson marking their inaugural participation.

Dr. Torin Sanders confirmed that our first cohort will soon begin implementing the Friendship Bench NOLA, a project that requires extensive, specialized training. This training will be led by Dr. Chibanda and his expert team, ensuring that our community-based approach is both effective and sustainable. Also present at this foundational meeting was Attorney Ron McClain, Executive Director of the Institute of Mental Hygiene, whose initial planning funds were instrumental in launching this effort.

This snapshot not only underscores SUNO's commitment to mental health and community collaboration but also highlights the deep partnerships that will drive our progress. As we move forward, the Friendship Bench NOLA will continue to serve as a beacon of support and innovation in New Orleans, aligning with our mission to enrich lives and foster resilient communities.



*Click the image above to watch the full story.*

# MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM



SUNO student presenters for the NASW-LA conference.  
From left to right: Michelle Ozah, Monique Ceasar, Kathleen Lantto, William Weaver

Kathleen Lantto was selected from among the state's Master of Social Work students to present her paper, ***Mental Healthcare Needs Assessment for Unhoused Adults with Severe Mental Illness: Research Proposal Paper***, at the National Association of Social Workers Louisiana Conference. This year's competitive field of candidates underscores Ms. Lantto's exceptional academic standing. Her professor, Dr. Jill Murray, identified and submitted the paper to the Social Work Department for review by the selection committee. The paper originated as an assignment in Dr. Murray's research class.

This honor reflects the outstanding work being done at the university, particularly within the Millie M. Charles School of Social Work. Of all the MSW students enrolled in Louisiana's universities, only two were chosen to present their papers to an audience of professional social work providers. Such recognition significantly advances the institution's reputation as a provider of quality social work education.

# SUNO ATHLETICS

For the thirteenth time this season, SUNO Men's Basketball superstar Jamal Gibson is racking up the accolades from the HBCU Athletic Conference! This Monday, the league crowned him the HBCUAC Defensive Player of the Week, and honestly, who's surprised?

In his latest games against Wiley and Philander Smith, Jamal was a rebounding machine, notching his jaw-dropping 53rd and 54th double-doubles! He averaged a whopping 21.5 rebounds per game—14 of those were defensive, because why not? He also snagged three steals and threw in a blocked shot for good measure. As a sophomore, he's already tallied a mind-blowing 898 rebounds, and last year he broke records with 474 in a single season. At this rate, 1,000 career rebounds is just around the corner! Oh, and did we mention he also crossed the 1,000 career points milestone in January 2025? Talk about making history!

And if that wasn't enough, Jamal recently snagged the titles of HBCU Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, and a spot on the ALL HBCUAC FIRST-TEAM.



## SENATOR JOSEPH BOUIE VISITS SUNO

Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) hosted the Charles Frye Memorial Lecture featuring The Honorable Joseph Bouie, Jr., Ph.D., LCSW, Louisiana State Senator for District 3. The lecture, titled "Where Do We Go from Here?: African America Post the 2024 Presidential Election," took place at the Millie M. Charles School of Social Work. Dr. Bouie, a retired professor and former Chancellor of SUNO, shared insights drawn from his extensive background in education, administration, and community engagement to explore the future of African Americans following the 2024 presidential election.

This event honored the legacy of Charles Frye, Ph.D., SUNO's first full-time director of the Center for African & African American Studies, by bringing together leading scholars, intellectuals, and political commentators. The gathering fostered dialogue on pressing social and political issues affecting African American communities, reflecting Dr. Frye's commitment to academic excellence and community advocacy.



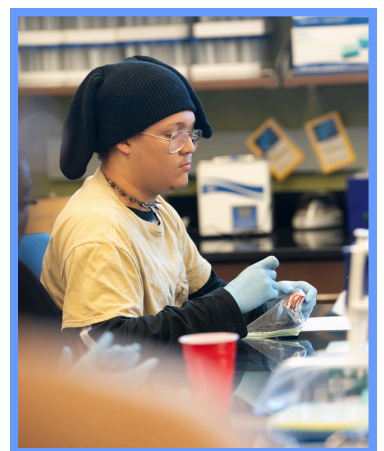
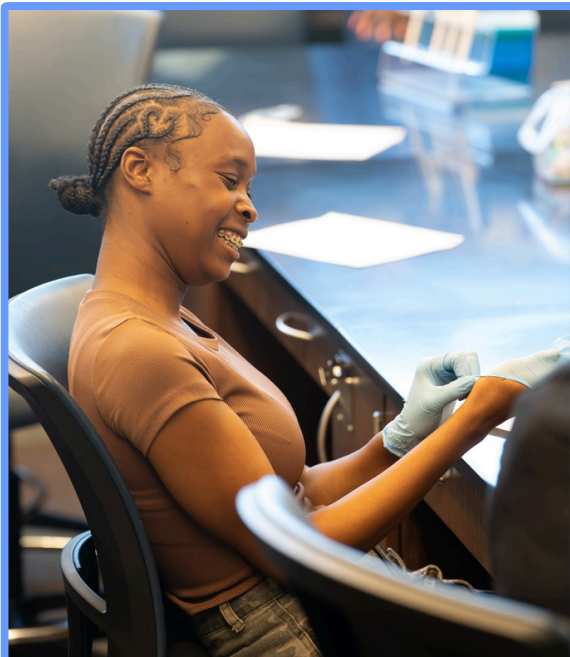


# SUNO FORENSIC SCIENCE PROGRAM HOSTS NET CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) recently hosted students from NET Charter High School for an enriching visit organized by the Forensic Science program. During this engaging experience, students participated in a hands-on forensic science project led by SUNO faculty, staff, and students, which allowed them to immerse themselves in crime scene investigation and laboratory analysis.

In addition to the forensic activities, the students toured the SUNO campus, gaining valuable insights into university life and the various academic opportunities available. They had the opportunity to interact with faculty and staff from key departments, including Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Support Services, and learned about the resources designed to support their educational journeys.

This visit not only provided students with a unique perspective on forensic science as a potential career path, but also offered them an in-depth look at the university's academic programs and student services. SUNO remains dedicated to fostering community engagement and inspiring the next generation of scholars through innovative and interactive learning experiences.





# SUNO MUSEUM OF ART: LIMINAL SPACES EXHIBITION OPENING



SUNOMA proudly hosted the two-day opening of Liminal Spaces: Selections from the Edward DeCarbo African Art Collection. Inspired by conversations with the DeCarbo family, this exhibition pays homage to Dr. Edward DeCarbo's scholarly teachings, which frequently engaged with the concepts of "liminality" and "liminal spaces." These terms encapsulate the power of African art to serve as a conduit between the tangible and intangible, the traditional and modern, and the individual and collective. The exhibition not only highlighted the generous donation of African art by Dr. Edward DeCarbo and his daughter, Vanessa DeCarbo, but also commemorated the first anniversary of his passing.

The opening events began on the morning of February 17th with a thought-provoking panel discussion on the significance of African art donations at SUNOMA. The panel featured esteemed speakers Dr. Sara Hollis, Dr. William Bertrand, and Ms. Vanessa DeCarbo. Attendees were captivated by the rich discourse on the importance of African art within academic and cultural institutions. Adding to the vibrant atmosphere, the event included an electrifying performance by stilt walkers and drummers from Djembafola and RocSolid Productions, infusing the gathering with traditional African rhythms and movement.





# SUNO MUSEUM OF ART: CONTINUED

The evening opening of the exhibition was a great success, with remarks from Chancellor James Ammons, Ms. Vanessa DeCarbo, Director Erika Witt, and Dr. Bree Cook. SUNOMA honored Dr. William Bertrand, Dr. Sara Hollis, and Ms. Vanessa DeCarbo for their contributions to the museum's success. The evening began with a moving performance by Djembafola, followed by a spiritual dance from stilt walkers. The celebration concluded with Sporty's Brass Band leading a jubilant procession, transforming grief into celebration in honor of Dr. DeCarbo's one-year transition.

On February 18th, the exhibition continued with *In Flow with the Spirit*, a memorial event held on the dock of the Natchez Steamboat. This deeply spiritual gathering, attended by Dr. DeCarbo's family and friends, honored African art and its creators. Chancellor Ammons, Director Witt, poet Sunni Patterson, and Reverend H. Scott Matheney offered reflections of comfort and remembrance. The memorial ended with a peaceful journey aboard the Steamboat Natchez, symbolizing the flow of spirit and heritage.

This exhibition and its events were made possible by the support of Title III, the SUNO Office of Communications, the DeCarbo family, Aramark, Ricoh Printing, Sporty's Brass Band, RocSolid Productions, Sunni Patterson, and others.

Liminal Spaces stands as a tribute to the enduring power of African art and the importance of cultural stewardship in higher education. SUNOMA remains committed to honoring the legacies of those who shape its mission, ensuring African art continues to bridge the past, present, and future for generations to come.



# SUNO

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