



## HBCU ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Jesse Stone Lecture Hall – Southern University Shreveport

10:00 AM – Noon

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Board of Regents
Dr. Camecia Smith Ross	Proxy, Southern University New Orleans
Rep. Steven Jackson	Proxy, House Education Committee
Dr. Marcus Jones	Proxy, University of Louisiana System
Rep. Rashid Young	Proxy, Speaker of the House Designee
Senator Katrina Jackson-Andrews	Designee, Senate Education Committee
Senator Sam Jenkins	Proxy, Senate President Designee
Representative Ed Larvadain	Proxy, Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus
Dr. Donovan Segura	Proxy, Southern University Ag Center
Dr. Allen Vital	Proxy, Southern University System
Chancellor John Pierre	Southern University A & M
Chancellor Aubra Gantt	Southern University Shreveport
Dr. Marlon Dickerson	Proxy, Southern University Law Center
Dr. Martin Lemelle	Grambling State University
<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr. Monique Guillory	Dillard University
Ms. Abbey-Lynn Gonzalez	Student Member, Dillard University
Dr. Reynold Verrett	Xavier University of Louisiana
VACANT	ACLU
Mr. Michael McClanahan	NAACP
Mr. Preston Castille	Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Dr. Larissa Littleton Steib	Delgado Community College
Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer	Urban League of Louisiana
Sec. Susana Schowen	Louisiana Workforce Commission
Ms. Jasmine Brown DeRouselle	Designee, Louisiana Economic Development

#### CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. The roll was taken and Ms. Brianna Golden-Phillips indicated that quorum had not been initially established. Quorum was later established during the meeting.

Dr. Reed opened the floor to Chancellor Aubra Gantt. Dr. Gantt welcomed the Council to Southern University Shreveport and expressed her gratitude for the Council attending the February meeting on campus.

Dr. Reed also acknowledged Mr. Quinton J. Aught, Field Representative for Congressman Cleo Field's Shreveport Office, who was in attendance.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Golden-Phillips informed Dr. Reed once a quorum had been established. Dr. Reed asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2024, meeting.

**On motion of Dr. Allen Vital, seconded by Chancellor John Pierre, the Council approved the minutes of the October 2, 2024, meeting.**

#### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senator Sam Jenkins thanked Dr. Reed and the Council for inviting him to participate at the meeting. He shared his thoughts on anticipated funding for the HBCUs in the upcoming legislative session and noted his appreciation for the passage of Act 751 (2024), which is helping campuses address deferred maintenance needs. He also noted that a gym is needed at Southern University Shreveport for the students and community.

Rep. Ed Larvadain noted his interest in ensuring that HBCUs receive adequate educational resources.

Rep. Steven Jackson shared his thoughts about the upcoming legislative session and anticipated there would be no additional cuts to higher education.

Rep. Rashid Young stated that legislators must ensure that topics such as capital outlay and deferred maintenance continue to be addressed during the upcoming legislative session and that HBCU projects be prioritized. He also shared his thoughts on ensuring HBCU students are able to participate in workforce and employment opportunities.

Senator Katrina Jackson-Andrews indicated the necessity of ensuring people are aware of the significance of HBCUs. She advised that it will be important for HBCUs to engage with members of the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus to discuss priorities as members continue to ensure that HBCUs are funded. She also encouraged broad advocacy from HBCU students, staff, faculty, alumni, and supporters throughout the year.

Dr. Reed acknowledged the collective impact of the Legislature during the 2024 Regular Session. She noted that higher education had been facing a \$250 million budget cut, but the executive budget instead included a "standstill budget". She expressed gratitude for the legislators who have been strong advocates for higher education, supporting both the fiscal and facility needs of the institutions.

#### THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

Dr. Reed introduced Mr. Corey J. Savage, Manager of Outreach and Engagement at the Walt Disney Company.

Mr. Savage shared a presentation on several opportunities at the Walt Disney Company. Disney Aspire is an educational investment and career development program for eligible hourly full- and part-time cast members and employees of the Company. Additionally, Disney on the Yard is an initiative dedicated to building a community for HBCU students and alumni working across The Walt Disney Company and providing meaningful opportunities.

Rep. Young and Rep. Larvadain acknowledged Disney's commitment to HBCUs and hoped that Disney plans to remain engaged with these institutions. Mr. Savage noted his commitment to expanding the talent pipeline and noted that Disney is working not only with HBCUs, but with all colleges and universities. Mr. Savage acknowledged the importance and mission of HBCUs.

Dr. Gantt requested the website for students and staff to learn more about the opportunities. Mr. Savage assured the Council that he will provide his contact information. Dr. Reed requested that each campus designate a point of contact to be shared with Mr. Savage.

Dr. Smith Ross asked about the March Disney on the Yard event at Dillard University in New Orleans and indicated that she could bring student leaders to experience the event. Mr. Savage stated that Disney is hosting a Yard Takeover on the campus of Dillard University with plans of hosting additional Yard Takeovers this year to celebrate the importance of HBCUs and to engage campus communities through academic engagement and band performances. He noted his interest in having a larger footprint in Louisiana.

Dr. Marla Dickerson asked how to create a more robust pipeline for HBCU law students. Mr. Savage stated that he wished to connect with Dr. Dickerson to discuss.

Chancellor John Pierre commended Disney and Mr. Savage for their partnership with the program "HBCU in LA," which had over 100 students in Los Angeles participate. The students had a wonderful experience and received free housing and stipends. Chancellor Pierre noted the importance of encouraging students to pursue these transformative opportunities at places like Disney, Warner Brothers, and Paramount, even though sometimes students are afraid to leave home.

Dr. Reed and the HBCU Advisory Council applauded Mr. Savage for his presentation and reminded each institution to send their institution's Disney point of contact to Ms. Golden-Phillips.

#### BOARD OF REGENTS UPDATES

Dr. Reed shared an update on annual legislative reports and upcoming legislative meetings, noting that higher education will be presenting the budget in House Appropriations on April 9, 2025.

Dr. Reed also invited campuses to encourage their students to nominate peers for acts of kindness as Louisiana native and CBS News contributor David Begnaud is launching a new storytelling initiative to spotlight college students who embody kindness, resilience, and community impact. Mr. Begnaud is seeking to bring national attention to the inspiring efforts of Louisiana's students who are making a real difference and will be selecting stories to share in 2025 as part of his "Beg-Knows America" series on CBS Mornings.

#### HBCU REPORT OVERVIEW

Ms. Golden-Phillips provided an overview of the 2024 HBCU Advisory Council report, which highlighted the great work of HBCUs including, but not limited to new academic programs, HBCU dual enrollment participation, and the award winning HBCU Day at the Capitol event among other notable activities. Dr. Reed expressed appreciation for the hard work of Ms. Golden-Phillips in generating the report and supporting the work of the Task Force.

#### OPEN DISCUSSION

Grambling - President Lemelle shared that he plans to focus on improving campus communication both internally and externally. He also noted the significance of current actions on the federal level and the impact these might have on the institutions throughout the state.

Southern Ag - Dr. Donovan Segura noted that agriculture is the “foundation to human ecology.” He further emphasized President Lemelle’s statements related to the importance of federal actions on campuses across the state.

Rep. Lavardain stated his concern about ensuring that HBCUs are present and participating in innovative opportunities. Both he and Senator Jackson-Andrews indicated the historic value of our HBCUs and the importance of strategic engagement in uncertain times.

SUSLA - Dr. Gantt acknowledged a large portion of Southern University Shreveport’s budget is federal support and that the institution is impacted by the cuts to federal programs. She also shared information on her newly developed strategic plan, which seeks to impact student outcomes and foster a climate of academic excellence.

SU A&M - Chancellor Pierre shared that Southern University A&M and the SU Ag have partnered with Saint Kitts, which is interested in the two-year programs offered in areas such as criminal justice and business management, as well as some of the engineering programs and curriculum development opportunities.

Dr. Gantt noted that the physical and mental health complex that Senator Jenkins mentioned is very important to the university and discussed her goal to acquire land adjacent to the institution to build a workforce training center to serve the city and the region. She also thanked Senator Jenkins for being instrumental in securing a mobile health unit, in partnership with Ochsner, in Shreveport. This unit includes access to dental services, a benefit to the SUSLA dental hygiene program.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered.

#### CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Reed thanked Dr. Gantt for SUSLA’s hospitality and offered her appreciation to the Council for traveling to attend the HBCU Advisory Council meeting and engaging in the robust conversation. The next HBCU Advisory Council meeting will be in Baton Rouge in April for HBCU Day at the Capitol.

#### ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Dr. Segura, seconded by Dr. Ross, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.