



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE  
**SPRING COMMENCEMENT**

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**GRADUATE CEREMONY**

**2026**

F.G. CLARK ACTIVITY CENTER  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

MAY 14, 2026  
2 P.M.

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA



## *S* history

The movement in Louisiana for an equal opportunity institution of higher learning was sponsored in the 1879 Louisiana State Constitutional Convention by delegates P.B.S. Pinchback, T.T. Allain, T.B. Stamps, and Henry Demas. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of this institution for the education of persons of color in New Orleans. Southern University, chartered by Legislative Act 87 in April 1880, had a 12-member Board of Trustees. The act provided for the establishment of a faculty of “arts and letters” competent in “every branch of liberal education.” The charter sought to open doors of state higher education to all “persons competent and deserving.” Southern opened with 12 students and a \$10,000 appropriation. With the passage of the 1890 Morrill Act, the University was reorganized to receive land-grant funds.

In 1912, Legislative Act 118 authorized the closing of Southern University in New Orleans, the sale of its property, and the reestablishment of the University on a new site. In 1914, the “new” Southern University opened in Scotlandville, Louisiana, receiving a portion of a \$50,000 national land-grant appropriation. Southern University in New Orleans and Southern University in Shreveport were authorized by Legislative Acts 28 and 42 in 1956 and 1964 respectively. The Southern University Board of Supervisors, a management board authorized by the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, was created to govern the Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Shreveport campuses. In 1985, the A.A. Lenoir Law School was designated the Southern University Law School. Dedicated in January 2002, Ashford O. Williams Hall is home to the fifth SU System campus, the Agricultural Research and Extension Center, which is located in Baton Rouge.

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

# SPRING GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT

MAY 14, 2026



# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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## CAPS AND GOWNS

Academic caps and gowns represent a tradition which has come down from the universities of the Middle Ages. They were once common forms of clothing and were retained by the clergy when the laity adopted modern dress. Early European universities were founded by the church and students were obliged to wear prescribed gowns and caps at all times.

The usual color for gowns in America is black, although some universities are gradually adopting colors representative of their institutions. Hoods are lined with the college colors and are trimmed with the color appropriate to the degree.

Caps are usually black. The tassel for the bachelor's degree may be the color distinctive of the degree. The tassel for the Doctor of Philosophy is made of gold thread.

## COLOR OF TASSELS

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Agriculture.....                              | <i>Maize</i>         |
| Arts.....                                     | <i>White</i>         |
| Business.....                                 | <i>Drab</i>          |
| Education.....                                | <i>Light Blue</i>    |
| Engineering.....                              | <i>Orange</i>        |
| Fine Arts.....                                | <i>Brown</i>         |
| Family & Consumer Sciences.....               | <i>Maroon</i>        |
| Mental Health Counseling.....                 | <i>Light Blue</i>    |
| Music.....                                    | <i>Pink</i>          |
| Nursing.....                                  | <i>Apricot</i>       |
| Public Policy & Urban Affairs.....            | <i>White</i>         |
| Rehabilitation Counseling.....                | <i>Golden Yellow</i> |
| Sciences.....                                 | <i>White</i>         |
| Speech-Language Pathology.....                | <i>Maize</i>         |
| Speech-Language & Audiology.....              | <i>Maize</i>         |
| Social Work.....                              | <i>Citron</i>        |
| Therapeutic Recreation & Leisure Studies..... | <i>Sage Green</i>    |
| Therapeutic Recreation.....                   | <i>Sage Green</i>    |



Southern University Board of Supervisors

Honorable Tony Clayton, *Chair*

Honorable Reggie Abraham, *Vice Chair*

Orlando F. McMeans, *Interim President of the Southern University System and  
Secretary to the Board of Supervisors*

Members of the Board

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Honorable Paul Matthews, Congressional District 1         | Honorable Ann A. Smith, Congressional District 5                     |
| Honorable Chris Masengill, Congressional District 1       | Honorable Myron K. Lawson, Congressional District 5                  |
| Honorable Edwin M. Shorty Jr., Congressional District 2   | Honorable Rani G. Whitfield, Congressional District 6                |
| Honorable Maple L. Gaines, Congressional District 2       | Honorable Donald Ray Henry, At Large                                 |
| Honorable Quincy Cawthorne, Congressional District 3      | Honorable Domoine D. Rutledge, At Large                              |
| Honorable Samuel C. Tolbert Jr., Congressional District 3 | Honorable Aaron Manzy, Athens, GA<br><i>(student representative)</i> |
| Honorable Zazell V. Dudley, Congressional District 4      |  |
| Honorable Henry Whitehorn, Congressional District 4       |  |

Marshals

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <i>University Marshal</i>                 | Donovan L. Segura, Ph.D. |
| <i>Chief Assistant University Marshal</i> | Lauri Patterson, J.D.    |

*Assistant University Marshals*

|                             |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Maya Riley Banks, Ph.D.     | Carmen Ginn Johnese, Ph.D.  | Anthony Stewart, Ph.D.       |
| Jackie Bryant               | Melissa Johnson, Ph.D.      | Annisa Leachman Taylor, DNP  |
| Christopher Chappell, Ph.D. | Emily Jackson-Osagie, Ph.D. | Tracey Taylor-Jarrell, Ph.D. |
| Lanell Kent Craig, Ph.D.    | Kourtnei Luster, DNP        | Yaw Twumasi, Ph.D.           |
| Fareed Dawan, Ph.D.         | Bonny McDonald, Ph.D.       | Brian Warren, Ph.D.          |
| James Durriseau, Ph.D.      | Lauri Patterson, J.D.       | Charmaine Williams, Ph.D.    |
| Marlin Ford, Ph.D.          | Jennifer Robertson          |                              |
| Yasser Ismail, Ph.D.        | Penny Sterling              |                              |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Chief Academic Officer</i> | Luria Young, Ph.D.<br><i>Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs</i> |
|-------------------------------|---|

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <i>Library</i> | Dawn Ventress Kight, Ph.D.<br><i>Dean</i> |
|----------------|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Dolores Margaret Richard Spikes<br/>Honors College</i> | Deadra James Mackie<br><i>Interim Dean</i> |
|---|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>International and<br/>Continuing Education</i> | Barbara W. Carpenter, Ph.D.<br><i>Dean</i> |
|---|--|

|                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Officer of Ceremonies</i> | Johlana Turner<br><i>Registrar</i> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>Announcers</i> | Robert René, Ph.D.<br><i>SU Board Relations Coordinator</i> |
|-------------------|---|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Tisha Y. Walker, Ph.D.<br><i>Associate Dean of Graduate Enrollment/Budget Operations</i> |
|--|--|



ORDER OF CEREMONY

**Spring 2026**

**John K. Pierre**

*Chancellor, Southern University and A&M College*

**Presiding**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Processional</i>                           | <i>"Pomp and Circumstance"</i> by Sir Edward Elgar   |
| <i>Invocation</i>                             | The Reverend Manuel Pigeo, III<br><i>Pastor</i><br>United Believers Baptist Church<br>Baton Rouge, Louisiana   |
| <i>Anthems</i>                                | <i>"The Star Spangled Banner"</i><br>Written by Francis Scott Key; performed by Deterrius Johnson,<br>accompanied by Professor Laurence Hebert<br><i>"Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing"</i><br>Written by James Weldon Johnson; performed by the Southern University<br>Concert Choir |
| <i>Introduction of Speaker</i>                | John K. Pierre   |
| <i>Commencement Address</i>                   | Harry Williams, Ph.D.<br><i>President &amp; CEO</i><br>Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf)   |
| <i>Musical Selection</i>                      | <i>"Lord, You Are Good"</i> (featuring Eric Pursley)<br>Written by Todd Galberth; performed by the Southern University<br>Gospel Choir   |
| <i>Certification of<br/>Degree Candidates</i> | Luria Young, Ph.D.   |
| <i>Conferring of Degrees</i>                  | John K. Pierre<br>Albertha H. Lawson, Ph.D.<br><i>Dean, Graduate School</i><br>Renita Marshall, DVM<br><i>Interim Dean, College of Agricultural, Human and<br/>Environmental Sciences</i><br>Donald Andrews, Ph.D.<br><i>Dean, College of Business</i>                         |



Cynthia Bryant, Ph.D.  
*Dean, College of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies*

Sandra C. Brown, Ph.D.  
*Dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health*

Lealon Martin, Ph.D.  
*Dean, College of Sciences and Engineering*

Damien Ejigiri, Ph.D.  
*Dean, Nelson Mandela College of Government and Social Sciences*

*Remarks & Acknowledgements* Orlando F. McMeans, Ph.D.  
*Interim President, Southern University System*  
John K. Pierre

*Induction into Alumni Federation* Darrin Dixon  
*Director, Southern University Alumni Affairs and Executive Director, Southern University Alumni Federation*

*The Alma Mater* “O Southern, Dear Southern”  
By R. E. Brown Jr.  
Led by the Southern University Concert Choir

*Benediction* The Reverend Manuel Pige, III

*Recessional* “Pomp and Circumstance” by Sir Edward Elgar

*The following list of graduates represents the most accurate information available at publication.  
The appearance of a name on this program and/or participation in the ceremony is  
presumptive of graduation, but not conclusive.*

# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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## SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Albertha H. Lawson, Ph.D., *Dean*

### CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

SPRING 2026

#### COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Renita Marshall, DVM, *Interim Dean*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

##### URBAN FORESTRY

Lakshmi Dasari, Pleasanton, CA

**Dissertation Title:** *Model Based Approach to Determine Urban Tree Canopy Influence on Erythemat UV-B Irradiation and Air Temperature and Relative Humidity.*

**Major Professor:** Yadong Qi, Ph.D.

Lucinda Kangwana, Kakamega, Kenya

**Dissertation Title:** *Assessing Precipitation Patterns and their Impact on Forest Cover Change in Kenya through Spatial Statistics and GIS.*

**Major Professor:** Yaw Twumasi, Ph.D.

Kellyn Lacour-Conant, Baton Rouge

**Dissertation Title:** *A Kinship Landscape of Kisatchie National Forest: Advancing Climate Resilience, Community Stewardship, and Restorative Justice on Public Lands.*

**Major Professor:** Yaw Twumasi, Ph.D.

Priscilla M. Loh, Accra, Ghana

**Dissertation Title:** *Using Satellite Remote Sensing to Examine Water Quality Variability in the Lower Mississippi River (2014 – 2024): Key Parameters and Related Social Challenges.*

**Major Professor:** Yaw Twumasi, Ph.D.

Janeth E. Mjema, Tanzania

**Dissertation Title:** *Remote Sensing-Based Analysis of Land Use Dynamics and their Impacts on Urban Forest Structure and Ecosystem Services in Dar-es -Salaam, Tanzania.*

**Major Professor:** Yaw Twumasi, Ph.D.

Titilope Olokunde, Lagos, Nigeria

**Dissertation Title:** *Examining the Impact of E-Commerce on Louisiana's Forest Industry and its Effects on its Urban Ecosystems Between 1999-2022.*

**Major Professor:** Yaw Twumasi, Ph.D.

#### COLLEGE OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH

Sandra Brown, Ph.D., *Dean*

##### DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

Geneva Carter-Albert, Denham Springs

**Capstone Title:** *Using Multicomponent Interventions to Improve Hypertension Control in African American Adults.*

**Capstone Advisor:** Wanda Spurlock, Ph.D.

Ruby S. Cooks, Natchez, MS

**Capstone Title:** *Improving Antibiotic Stewardship for Acute Upper Respiratory Symptoms in Primary Care.*

**Capstone Advisor:** Kourtnei Atkins-Luster, Ph.D.

Tunya S. Jack, Baton Rouge

**Capstone Title:** *In individuals with PTSD, How Does Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with Medication Compared to Medication Alone Affect the Quality of Life Within a 12-Week Period?*

**Capstone Advisor:** Alicia Restivo, Ph.D.



# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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Stephanie Johnson, Geismar

**Capstone Title:** *Impact of Rapid Point-of-Care Sexually Transmitted Infection Testing on Reinfection Rates Among African American Adults in a Primary Care Setting.*

**Capstone Advisor:** Wanda Spurlock, Ph.D.

Shawndolyn Lebine, Lafayette

**Capstone Title:** *The Impact of Early Initiation of Low-Dose Aspirin on the Prevention of Preeclampsia in High-Risk Pregnant Women.*

**Capstone Advisor:** Wanda Spurlock, Ph.D.

LaTosha Williams, Zachary

**Capstone Title:** *988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: An Effective Resource for Individuals in a Mental Health Crisis.*

**Capstone Advisor:** Kourtnei Atkins-Luster, Ph.D.

## COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

Lealon Martin, Ph.D., *Dean*

### DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

#### SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

Linda Joseph, New Orleans

**Dissertation Title:** *Louisiana Secondary Teachers' Perceptions of AI Integration: "A UTAUT-Guided Qualitative Study."*

**Major Professor:** Moustapha Diack, Ph.D.

Darryl Minor, Baton Rouge

**Dissertation Title:** *Understanding STEM Major Change Rates.*

**Major Professor:** Nastassia Jones, Ph.D.

Deadra L. James Mackie, Baker

**Dissertation Title:** *An Exploratory Review of the Learning Experiences of Undergraduate Students in STEM During the Coronavirus Pandemic: The Impact of Emergency Remote Learning.*

**Major Professor:** Christopher Guillory, Ph.D.

## NELSON MANDELA COLLEGE OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Damien Ejjigiri, Ph.D., *Dean*

### DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

#### PUBLIC POLICY

Anindya Ahmed, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Dissertation Title:** *A Comparative Analysis of the Impact of Flat and Progressive Tax Policy on Economic Growth - Georgia vs. Croatia.*

**Major Professor:** Augustine Adu Frimpong, Ph.D.

Desiree N. Ephrom, Baton Rouge

**Dissertation Title:** *The Impact of Municipal Bonds on Capital Investment in the USA.*

**Major Professor:** Onyumbwe Lukongo, Ph.D.



# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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Eric Pursley, Lafayette

**Dissertation Title:** *An Analysis of LEAP 2025 Achievement and Instructional Supports in Three Louisiana Virtual Charter Schools.*

**Major Professor:** Revathi Hines, Ph.D.

Leon Winters, Carencro

**Dissertation Title:** *Ethical Adherence and Student Outcomes: A Mixed-Methods Study of Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) in a Louisiana School District.*

**Major Professor:** Vanessa Greenslade, Ph.D.

Jaraski White, Atlanta, GA

**Dissertation Title:** *Patterns of IDEA due process hearings in Louisiana K–12 schools: A mixed-methods analysis of trends in special education hearings, disability and district outcomes, and systemic barriers from 2012–2022.*

**Major Professor:** Vanessa Greenslade, Ph.D.

## EXECUTIVE PUBLIC POLICY

Jaelyn Brianna Hickman, Denham Springs

**Dissertation Title:** *An Examination of Fatal Work Injuries in the United States.*

**Major Professor:** Onyumbé Lukongo, Ph.D.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES  
Renita Marshall, DVM, *Interim Dean*

## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN URBAN FORESTRY

Payton Madison Beaner, Lafayette

Jeremy W. Fontenot, Baker

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
Donald Andrews, Ph.D., *Dean*

## MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Johnessia Coleman, Baton Rouge

Alaric Jackson, III, Baton Rouge

Brianna Nicole Mayweather, Shreveport

Erica R. Payne, Baton Rouge

Ashari J. Robinson, Baton Rouge

Glen Robinson, Gibson

Jared Wilson, Baton Rouge

Shamari T. Wilson, Baton Rouge

## MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ONLINE

Carlos Brister, Hammond

Meagan Brooks, Donaldsonville

Maya Campbell, Baker

Warren J. Ferdinand, Port Allen

Areco Nikal Foster, Baton Rouge

Laroy Gay, Zachary

\*Joseph M. Glover, Baton Rouge

Mynthia W. Gonkpala,

Nimba County, Liberia

Jamal Holland, Baton Rouge

Orlanzo Howard, Moon Township, PA

Tierani Jackson, Spanish Fort, AL



# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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Jacorey James, Zachary  
Kiara Kabbara, Dallas, TX  
\*Eldrin D. Lewis, Gonzales  
Eta Magambo, Atlanta, GA  
Kennedi M. Mason, Baker

Kennedi M. McKnight, Baton Rouge  
Myah R. Page, Baton Rouge  
\*JáMeracle A.B. Rogers, Baker  
KiOra Melvaughn Spriggs,  
Fort Walton Beach, FL

## COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

*Cynthia Bryant, Ph.D., Dean*

### MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING

\*Kyiesha Matthews Campbell, Norwood

\*Stasha Thomas, LaPlace

## COLLEGE OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH

*Sandra Brown, Ph.D., Dean*

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

\*Nakia M. Chandler, Chalmette  
Alyssa Ha, Baton Rouge  
Andre C. Nunley, Houston, TX

Michelle S. Rios, Baker, LA  
Michael Rowan, Baton Rouge

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING

\*Brianna Martin, Compton, CA

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Erica Baham, Robert  
Alexandria Cooper-Davis, Lafayette  
Jessica Fudge, Zachary  
Christa B. Hines, Plaquemine

Renecia K. Hodges, Bogalusa  
Kelsey Jones, Plaquemine  
Shanekqua S. Mingo, Angie  
Jartavia T. Washington, Baywood

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Jada Brown, Gonzales  
\*Earlicia C. Cavalier, Baton Rouge  
Hannah Correia, Dartmouth  
Doretha Dixon, Saint Gabriel  
\*Kali Franklin, Amite  
Marliyah Gilmore, North Little Rock, AR  
Myah Johnson, Baton Rouge  
Lauren LeBlanc, Dallas, TX  
Xamaria Lockett, Pearl, MS  
Anna R. Mayronne, Covington

Jada McGhee, Bossier  
Laila B. Pitre, Geismar  
Noah J. Price, Baton Rouge  
Caroline E. Reulet, Vacherie  
Caroline Rome, Donaldsonville  
Claire Segura, Denham Springs  
Melanie Terrio, Zachary  
Madison N. Wiebelt, Slidell  
Kennedy Williams, Decatur, GA



# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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## COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

Lealon Martin, Ph.D., *Dean*

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOLOGY

Tobechukwu M. Aghadinuno, Addis  
*Thesis Title: Effects of Nanoplastic Exposure on  
Prostate Cancer Progression.*

Tenae O. Marshall, LaPlace  
Eleisha N. Thompson, Spartanburg, SC

*Thesis Advisor:* Eduardo Martinez-Ceballos, Ph.D.

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Likem K. Dunyo, Accra, Ghana  
*Thesis Title: A Usability of a Virtual  
Reality Training Environment for  
Addictive Manufacturing Education.*

Shravani Reddy Palugula, Hyderabad, India

*Thesis Advisor:* Kruthika Krishnappa, Ph.D.

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING

Osazuwa Awanbor, Baton Rouge  
Stephen Dobreh, Accra, Ghana  
*Thesis Title: Fabrication and Characterization  
of Sugarcane Bagasse-Reinforced Vitrimers  
Composites.*

Angela Lararte, Mansura  
Chukwunonso Samuel, Obowo, Nigeria  
*Thesis Title: Modeling and Intelligent Energy  
Management of a Mobile Stand-Alone  
Hybrid AC/DC Microgrid.*

*Thesis Advisor:* Patrick Mensah, Ph.D.

*Thesis Advisor:* Radian Belu, Ph.D.

### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND PHYSICS

Mohammad Ansuzzaman,  
Kishoreganj, Bangladesh  
*Thesis Title: Activated and Nitrogen-Doped  
Biomass Carbon for High-Performance  
Oxygen Reduction Reaction: A Structure-  
Property Study.*

Karriem Upshaw, Addis

*Thesis Advisor:* Anthony Stewart, Ph.D.



# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

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NELSON MANDELA COLLEGE OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Damien Ejjigiri, Ph.D., *Dean*

## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Trinity D. Bryant, Baton Rouge  
Destiny Collins, New Orleans  
Sharielle Collins, Zachary

Preia Myishia Everett, Detroit, MI  
Kenntonio Rosette, Opelousas

## EXECUTIVE MASTER IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

Shanyla A. Brailey, Maurice  
Ursula Megan Jackson, Port Allen  
Marcisha Johnson, Ferriday  
Congalona Kynyetta Kersh, Baker  
Kevin W. Muse, Denham Springs

Joseph J. O'Neal, Pine Bluff, AR  
\*Ebriana Stewart, New Orleans  
Queena Taylor, Waggaman  
Mykel Vincent, Baltimore, MD  
Corione Williams, Walker

## MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Corey D. Deal, Alexandria  
Rachnelle U. Green, Donaldsonville  
Kyra M. Griffin, Zachary

Julius J. McCray, Baton Rouge  
Kimberly Singleton, Baton Rouge  
Micah Jenae Taylor, Zachary

## EXECUTIVE MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Safiyy A. Abdel-Raof, Baton Rouge  
Jasmine Ciera Anderson, Jeffersonville, GA  
Ashanti M. George-Paulin, New Orleans  
Alesia Hogan, Baton Rouge

\*Charles E. Masters, Dallas, TX  
\*Angela Myles, Shreveport  
Chandrika Dená Rideau, Opelousas  
\*Shalita Williams, Zachary

## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Political Science

Quinn Buckley, Washington, D.C.  
***Thesis Title: Voices of Resistance: Music as a  
Political Tool During Jim Crow.***  
***Thesis Advisor:*** Albert Samuels, Ph.D.

Sara Martin, Baton Rouge  
***Thesis Title: Educating for Endurance: HBCU  
and the Rebirth of Democratic Faith.***  
***Thesis Advisor:*** Albert Samuels, Ph.D.

*\*Summer 2026 Graduates*





*Commencement Speaker*  
**Dr. Harry L. Williams**

*President and CEO*

Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF)

Dr. Harry L. Williams serves as president and CEO of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF), the nation's foremost organization exclusively representing the Black college community. Leading TMCF, Dr. Williams oversees its 57 member schools, comprising America's publicly supported historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), historically Black community colleges (HBCCs) and predominantly Black institutions (PBIs), collectively educating 80% of students attending HBCUs.

Under his visionary leadership, TMCF has experienced unparalleled growth, witnessing a remarkable revenue expansion exceeding 250%. His strategic direction has elevated TMCF to not only serve as the premier representative of the HBCU community but also as a thought leader in equity, access and inclusion.

Dr. Williams has successfully forged strategic partnerships with leading Fortune 500 companies, including The Boeing Company, Medtronic, Visa, Ally Financial and Hennessy USA. His adept leadership has reimagined enduring partnerships with entities like Lowe's, the NBA and Wells Fargo, positioning TMCF as the foremost source for major employers seeking top diverse talent for competitive internships and corporate careers.

Emphasizing bipartisan collaboration, Dr. Williams has positioned TMCF to play a pivotal role in accelerating the legislative agenda for the sustainability of HBCUs. TMCF, under his guidance, has been at the forefront of significant national legislative victories, earning respect and trust from elected and appointed leaders on both sides of the aisle in Congress and the White House.

Formerly a distinguished HBCU president at Delaware State University, Dr. Williams utilized his tenure to increase student enrollment and foster groundbreaking public-private partnerships, securing multimillion-dollar investments into the campus. His commitment to institutional sustainability is evident through his efforts to enhance cooperation among TMCF member schools, creating a supportive network for HBCU leaders to share best practices and act collectively.

In a forward-thinking move in 2022, Dr. Williams expanded TMCF's impact by inviting HBCCs to join the membership, thereby supporting a diverse set of pathways to achievement.

Dr. Williams has been recognized with numerous awards and accolades for his contributions to higher education. His illustrious career includes senior positions at the University of North Carolina General Administration, Appalachian State University and North Carolina A&T State University.

He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Appalachian State University and a doctorate from East Tennessee State University. Named president emeritus of Delaware State University, he is also a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

Dr. Williams is a devoted family man. Married to Dr. Robin S. Williams, they take pride in their two accomplished sons, Austin and Gavin, both Howard University graduates. Gavin, now a third-year law student at the Southern University Law Center, carries on the family's legacy of academic excellence. Dr. Williams is also a doting grandfather to Porter Rae and Bloom Leigh, the daughters of Austin and his wife, Reagan.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

By Francis Scott Key, 1814

Arrangement by Thomas Dawson

*Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light*

*What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?*

*Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,*

*O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?*

*And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,*

*Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.*

*Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave*

*O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

“LIFT EV’RY VOICE AND SING”  
By James Weldon Johnson, 1899  
Arrangement by John Rosamond Johnson

*Lift ev’ry voice and sing*

*‘Til earth and heaven ring*

*Ring with the harmonies of Liberty*

*Let our rejoicing rise*

*High as the list’ning skies*

*Let it resound loud as the rolling sea*

*Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us*

*Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us*

*Facing the rising sun of our new day begun*

*Let us march on ‘til victory is won.*

ALMA MATER

*Original Words And Music By R.E. Brown, Jr.*

*Dear Southern*

*O Southern, Dear Southern, Thy praises we shall sing*

*Until all the heavens and echoes loudly ring.*

*The winds of the sky as they pass us by*

*Will adoration bring.*

*O Southern, Dear Southern, we owe our all to Thee*

*In downfall or victory, we'll always loyal be.*

*Thy Sons and Daughters as they work*

*Will be inspired by Thee.*

*O Southern, Dear Southern, Thy name will ever be*

*As mighty as the river that flows on to the sea.*

*As pure and true as the Gold and Blue*

*That stand out bold for Thee.*

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
ALUMNI FEDERATION PLEDGE

I \_\_\_\_\_, an alumnus of Southern University, do hereby pledge allegiance to the Southern University Alumni Federation, and the great honored institution which it represents. I promise to remain loyal, faithful, and steadfast in my support of its programs, uplift of its principles, maintenance of its tradition, and defense of its honor.

I further promise to always stand ready to contribute my time, efforts, financial assistance, and services toward the advancement of the welfare of the Southern University Alumni Federation and my beloved Alma Mater, so help me God.

## *A closing message*

*As we congratulate our distinguished graduates and honor their accomplishments, we acknowledge the tremendous support from parents, guardians, family members, and friends. Thank you for your dedication and commitment throughout their journey to receive a first-class education at Southern University. We appreciate your encouragement and inspiration.*

Best wishes,  
John K. Pierre  
Chancellor, Southern University and A&M College

**2026 SPRINGS COMMENCEMENT**

*Committee Members*

Welton Bowie  
Marcus Brown  
Cynthia Bryant  
April Buffington  
Barbara Carpenter  
Eric Cantrelle  
De'Andre L. Dearinge  
Darrin Dixon  
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