2022 MEA/SSWD CENTER SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Vision for the Future of Higher Education in Agriculture

May 11-12, 2022
N.C. A&T University Farm Pavilion
The 1890 Center of Excellence for Student Success and Workforce Development (MEA Center) was funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in 2021 to increase the diversity of the agricultural workforce in the United States.

Project partially funded by the United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture; Award #: 2020-38427-31516

USDA
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
2022 MEA/SSWD CENTER
SPRING SYMPOSIUM
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of Higher Education in Agriculture
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SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS
Mohamed Ahmedna, Ph.D., dean of the College of Agriculture and
Environmental Sciences, N.C. A&T
Misty Blue-Terry, Ph.D., STEM educator, Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T
Paula E. Faulkner, Ph.D., professor of Agricultural Education, N.C. A&T

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00a</td>
<td>Registration Open</td>
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<td>pick up name badges and conference materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00a</td>
<td>Opening session and Keynote address</td>
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<td>Dionne Toombs, Ph.D., acting director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00a</td>
<td>Workshop 1: Learning Beyond the Classroom</td>
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<td>An interactive session on experiential learning led by former FAMU administrator Verian Thomas, Ph.D. will examine the role, benefits, and implementation of experiential learning programs in the agricultural sciences.</td>
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<td>With Neil James, Ph.D. (Florida A&amp;M University)</td>
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<td>M. Ray McKinnie, Ph.D. (Virginia State University)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00a</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:15a</td>
<td>Workshop 2: Why Mentoring Matters: Creating a Sense of Belonging</td>
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<td>Nina Lyon Bennett, Ph.D. (University of Arkansas Pine Bluff); Tiffany Wiggins, Ph.D. (Mentor Collective) and Dawn Nail, Ph.D. (N.C. A&amp;T) will lead a robust discussion of the role of peer-to-peer student mentoring in supporting recruitment, retention and graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30p</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>Panel of University Presidents: Moderated by Alton Thompson, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Harold L. Martin, Ph.D., chancellor of N.C. A&amp;T</td>
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<td>Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D., president of Virginia State University</td>
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<td>Juliette Bell, Ph.D., former president of University of Maryland Eastern Shore</td>
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<td>Mortimer Neufville, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of the 1890 Universities Foundation</td>
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Schedule continues on following page.
## DAY 1 (CONTINUED)

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| 2:00p | **Workshop 3: Employability Skills...The Soft Side of Ag*STEM**  
Panelists from government, industry, academia and NGO discuss soft-skill development as part of the pathway to careers in food, agriculture, natural resources and related areas.  
Garreth T. Hubbard, manager, Federal Government & Industry Affairs at Land O’Lakes, Inc.  
Dennetta Bradford, senior manager, Private Brands in Product Development - (Produce), Walmart Inc.  
Kamilah Grant, national program leader, USDA-NIFA-Division of Animal Systems  
Wendy Fink, executive director, Academic Programs Section of the Board on Agriculture Assembly and assistant vice president for the Office of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources at APLU  
Moderators: Adrian Hendricks (Lincoln University) and Olga Bolden-Tiller (Tuskegee University) |
| 3:00p | Break |
| 3:15p | **Workshop 4: Emerging Technologies: Challenges and Opportunities for 1890 Land Grant Universities**  
Brief presentations on precision agriculture, biotechnology, and drone usage in agriculture will be followed by an open discussion about the challenges, potential solutions and opportunities for the 1890 Land Grant Universities.  
Cedric Ogden, Ph.D., Extension engineer and professor at Fort Valley State University  
Benham Khatabi, Ph.D., assistant professor, plant-microbe interactions/plant pathology at University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Cranos Williams, Ph.D., Goodnight Distinguished Professor of Agricultural Analytics; platform director, NC State University Plant Sciences Initiative  
Moderated by Jurgen Schwarz, Ph.D. at University of Maryland Eastern Shore |
| 4:30p | Break |
| 5:00p | Networking Event |
| 6:00p | Dinner Reception |

### DAY 2: THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:30a</td>
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| 8:00a | **Working session – small group discussions**  
- 4-H – Misty Blue-Terry, Ph.D., STEM specialist at N.C. A&T Cooperative Extension  
- Recruiting, Retaining and Mentoring Underrepresented Students – Nina Lyon-Bennett, Ph.D.  
- Experiential Learning – James Neil, Ph.D.  
- Workforce Development – Olga Bolden-Tiller, Ph.D.  
- Emerging Technologies – Ralph Noble, Ph.D. |
| 9:30a | Closing session |
DAY 2 (CONTINUED)

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<tr>
<th>10:00a</th>
<th>Educational Tour #1</th>
<th>Educational Tour #2</th>
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<td>University Farm educational tour: Attendees will tour the University farm and visit current research projects taking place.</td>
<td>Meeshay Williams-Wheeler, Ph.D. will lead a campus tour of various sites, including the Greensboro Four statue and the Child Development Laboratory. Faculty researchers will greet attendees and provide an overview of research being conducted in Benbow Hall, Webb Hall, and Carver Hall.</td>
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| 12:00p | Lunch (boxed) |
| 1:00p  | Adjourn |

Thank you for attending. Safe travels home!

Please be sure to complete the evaluations after each session, and at the end of the symposium.

EDUCATIONAL TOUR #1
UNIVERSITY FARM

10:00 - 10:30 am Hemp research presentation at the Farm Pavilion
10:40 - 11 am The Student Farm, adjacent to the Pavilion
11:10 - 11:30 am Visit to high tunnels on the Farm

EDUCATIONAL TOUR #2
N.C. A&T CAMPUS

Meeshay Williams-Wheeler, Ph.D., will lead the group tour of various sites on campus, including the Greensboro Four statue and the Child Development Laboratory. Faculty researchers will provide an overview of research being conducted in the various academic buildings.

POSTERS OF FEATURED USDA/NIFA-FUNDED PROJECTS
DENNETTA BRADFORD

Walmart Inc.: Senior Manager, Private Brands in Product Development - (Produce)

Dennetta Bradford has over 20 years experience in the food industry driving profitable growth for leading Consumer Goods and Retail organizations through product innovation, quality monitoring, cost management and formulation optimization, and she currently serves as Senior Manager Product Development Private Brands with Walmart, Inc. Prior to taking on this role in 2013, she Manager Product Development Private Brands and Product Technologist with Walmart, Inc. Dennetta is a proud graduate of Tuskegee University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Food and Nutritional Science. After obtaining her degree, Dennetta embarked on a productive career in industry, working first with Glory Foods as a Food Technologist before joining Unilever as a Principal Food Scientist. She is a lover of food and beverages with technical expertise in adult beverages, bakery, deli, dry grocery, frozen, produce and thermally processed food products. Dennetta has amassed numerous training certificates germane to her discipline in addition to a number of individual and team awards during her time at Unilever and Walmart, Inc.
WENDY FINK

Executive Director of the Academic Programs Section (APS) of the Board on Agriculture Assembly & Assistant Vice President for the Office of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources (FANR) at APLU

Wendy Fink is Executive Director of the Academic Programs Section (APS) of the Board on Agriculture Assembly & Assistant Vice President for the Office of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources (FANR) at APLU. Wendy provides strategic guidance and leadership to APS to elevate the teaching mission within FANR and among federal policymakers. She engages with APS leadership to set goals and priorities and host online and in-person events of relevance to members. She encourages collaboration between member institutions, promotes the teaching mission through awards for excellence and innovation, and has conducted research on the employability skills preparedness of new graduates. As Assistant VP for FANR, she works on cross-office collaborations that benefit FANR and APLU.

Previously, Wendy worked with the Board on Natural Resources and the Board on Oceans, Atmosphere, and Climate on federal relations requests as well as a strategic roadmap for science, education and outreach in the natural resources. Wendy helped lead APLU’s efforts to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act by having public universities be a centerpiece of the 2012 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Prior to joining APLU, Wendy spent five years at the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology (PIFB) as Manager of Science and Public Policy, assisting in development of reports and conferences which contributed to public discussion of agricultural biotechnology.

Before PIFB, Wendy worked as legislative assistant for Rep. Bob Schaffer (R-CO), providing legislative advice and handling constituent matters related to agricultural, natural resources, science, energy, and transportation issues.

Prior to her work in Washington, she worked for several employers, including the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Corn Growers Association, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Wendy received her master’s degrees in agronomy and history, and her undergraduate degree in anthropology from Kansas State University.
KAMILAH GRANT
USDA-NIFA-Division of Animal Systems: National Program Leader

Kamilah E. Grant, PhD recently joined the USDA-NIFA as a National Program Leader for the Division of Animal Systems https://www.nifa.usda.gov/kamilah-grant. Dr. Grant obtained both a BS and MS (reproductive physiology) in Animal and Poultry Sciences from Tuskegee University (TU). She went on to earn her Ph.D. in Agriculture Life Sciences (Genetics) from Mississippi State University. She completed her postdoctoral appointment at TU College of Veterinary Medicine in pathobiology before transitioning into her first faculty position at TU before joining Alcorn State University where she served as an Assistant Professor of animal science and biotechnology and IACUC Chair at Alcorn State University, teaching courses such as reproductive physiology, advanced reproductive physiology, advanced molecular biology, molecular genetics, and anatomy and physiology, and later at ASU. During her time in academia, Dr. Grant cultivated her passion for mentorship and diversification of biological sciences by serving as co-director of Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Math (STEAM) summer programs for high school and community college students as well as a mentor to undergraduates participating in the Integrative Biosciences Research Experience for Undergraduates (IBS-REU) summer program. From 2009 until the recent ending of the program, Dr. Grant served as a mentor for the Federation of Societies for Experimental Biology/Maximizing Access to Research Careers (FASEB/MARC) in addition to advising several student organizations including Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS). Dr. Grant has also spearheaded and collaborated on numerous workshops focused on reproductive physiology and hands-on training centered around Artificial Insemination and Assisted reproductive techniques in small ruminants and cattle for limited-resource farmers both domestically and internationally, including in Bangladesh as a part of the Winrock International’s Farmer2Farmer program. Dr. Grant has collaborated and participated in multiple projects, conference proceedings, and referred journal articles, resulting in various honors and awards, all attributing to her recognition as one of the 1000 Inspiring Black Scientists in America (http://crosstalk.cell.com/blog/1000-inspiring-black-scientists-in-america).
Garreth Hubbard works with the Land O’Lakes Government Relations Team, where he manages Federal and Industry Affairs.

In this role, Garreth works to both educate and advocate Land O’Lakes policy priorities across Capitol Hill, administrative officials, and industry groups. His current policy portfolio includes issues such as supply chain, tax policy, antitrust/competition, racial equity and social justice, amongst others.

Garreth joined the Land O’Lakes team in 2015 as a Business Optimization Analyst within their animal nutrition business, Purina Animal Nutrition, where he developed and managed pricing strategies for commercial poultry, macro ingredients, and dairy. During that time, he also assumed responsibility for managing pricing and risk for their entire outbound freight portfolio, including containers, rail, and trucking modules.

Before Land O’Lakes, Garreth worked as a commodity trades with The Scoular Company, where he managed risk management and trading strategies for corn, wheat, and soybean. Garreth also has previous experience as a Global Market Analyst within USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service. Garreth also served as staff for Congressman Sanford Bishop (D-GA).

Garreth is a proud graduate of Florida A&M University, where he received his bachelor’s degree in Animal Science and Agricultural Business. Garreth also holds a masters degree in Agricultural Economics from Alcorn State University.

Garreth and his wife, Andrea, are new residents of Washington, D.C.
BEHNAM KHATABI
Associate Professor of Plant-Microbe Interactions/Plant Pathology at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Dr. Behnam Khatabi is an Associate Professor of Plant-Microbe Interactions/Plant Pathology at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Dr. Khatabi conducts a broad range of research projects from basic and applied plant pathology to interdisciplinary plant-microbe interactions. Dr. Khatabi offers training in cellular biology, molecular biology, and recombinant DNA technology and Techniques in Molecular Biology and Agro-biotechnology
DAWN M. NAIL
Higher Education Professional and Educator, Public Relations/Communications Practitioner

Dr. Dawn Nail has worked in the corporate and higher education sectors for over 25 years. At North Carolina A&T State University, she has taught in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, served as Associate Director, Communications Specialist, and Director of Enrollment Management Communication in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions amongst other roles. Prior to coming to A&T, she gained several years in management with AT&T Mobility and worked as a Leadership Development Manager for NCO Customer Management. During that time, she also conducted professional development training at some of the nation’s largest corporations, including American Express and Wells Fargo. Today, Dawn is Interim Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, after also serving as Director of the Center for Academic Excellence, Director of Training and Development Workshop Services, Academic Advisor and Associate Director in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations from North Carolina A&T State University, a Master of Arts in Corporate Communication from Austin Peay State University, and a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Management from Capella University. Her research interests include HBCUs, Advising, Enrollment Management and Mentoring. Dawn is a member of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, NACADA and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She also enjoys public speaking, mentoring, writing and life near her hometown of Charlotte, NC.
CEDRIC OGDEN
Extension Engineer & Professor at Fort Valley State University

Cedric Ogden Ph.D., born and raised in Middle Georgia, received his Bachelor’s degree from Fort Valley State University (FVSU) in Engineering Technology and receive his Master’s degree (Southern Illinois University) and Doctoral degree (Purdue University) in Agricultural & Biological Engineering. Dr. Ogden currently serves as an Extension engineer and professor at Fort Valley State University where he engages in teaching, research, and extension. The issues of population growth and climate change becoming a global concern provides the inspiration behind his current ventures in rural development, natural resources, and emerging technologies in agriculture.

Dr. Ogden’s exertion with agricultural technology at FVSU began with renewable energy initiatives to provide solar power to six FVSU greenhouses and two facilities using both off-grid and on-grid applications in efforts to reduce the University’s energy costs. More recently, Dr. Ogden orchestrated a collaborative project covering over 100 acres with Georgia Power Company and the Southern Company bringing to life one of the largest solar power sites on a US collegiate campus while providing clean, renewable utility power to over three thousand middle Georgia residents. In addition to his work with renewable energy, Dr. Ogden leads several funded research projects implementing unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) to the many outdoor tasks associated with agriculture production and land development. From using drones to determine healthy & stressed crops with precision-level accuracy to evaluating Georgia pine tree forests for insect damage and infestation, Dr. Ogden has sparked the interests of students and the community back into agriculture.

Not only have students gravitated to the infusion of technology into agriculture, but Dr. Ogden’s work has also caught the attention of foreign and developing countries. He has traveled to continents of Asia and Africa to assist with village development and specialty crop management. Dr. Ogden’s latest venture to Nigeria harbored farm management training and aerial field-mapping using drones to develop productive agricultural fields, there he also provided drone-use workshops and presentations to Bender School in Eku and Delta State University in Abraka. His travels to Kenya, Rwanda and Ghana have created collaborative research partnerships with institutions and exchange programs opening doors for FVSU students with global experience.

Innovation and capacity building will allow not just community growth but global growth. As a proponent of rural development & sustainability, Dr. Cedric Ogden is a shining light in technological advancements in agriculture providing world-wide impact.
Verian D. Thomas, Ph.D., who recently retired as professor and Associate Dean for Recruitment, Student Support, and Alumni Affairs for the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida A&M University, served FAMU for thirty-nine years. She has served CAFS in several academic positions that included Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Division Director for Agricultural Sciences, Graduate Program Coordinator, and FAMU as the Interim Dean for Graduate Studies.

Thomas was very passionate about the professional growth and development of her students in CAFS, and implemented several programs that increased student recruitment, support and retention. These programs include the Cultivating Undergraduate Research Scholars Program that pairs undergraduate students with research mentors to conduct research, and the CAFS AG Ambassador Program, which helps with student recruitment. While serving as graduate coordinator, Thomas and the CAFS graduate students founded the FAMU Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Chapter, and later, she served as the national president-elect, president, and past president for MANRRS.

In her efforts to create a pre-college pipeline into CAFS, Thomas collaborated with the FAMU Developmental Research School for over a decade, and she helped the school introduce an Agricultural Sciences Academy that offers instruction in food and agricultural sciences in the middle and high schools. In addition, Thomas offered summer programs for middle and high school students and teachers through the Raising Agriculturally and Technologically Literate Rattlers (RATLR) program, and a Saturday morning program, Kids Involved in Mathematics and Science (KIMS), for K – 3 students. Thomas also introduced several student mentoring programs that helped to support CAFS students while they matriculated at FAMU.

During her tenure, Thomas procured more than $4 million in federal and state funds.

Thomas is enjoying her retirement with her three adult children: daughter, Opeyemi Lamikanra, M.D.; daughter, Adebola Lamikanra; and son, Olufemi A. Lamikanra, M.B.A., CFP®; and grandson, Alexander Kai Ijamakinwa.
DIONNE TOOMBS  
Acting Director, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Dr. Dionne Toombs is currently the Acting Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s extramural grant funding agency for agricultural research, education, and Extension programs across the nation.

Previously, Dr. Toombs was Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS), where led a wide range of issues affecting science programs and science policy in agricultural research, education, and economics. She directed and coordinated activities of OCS to strengthen science and science leadership, improve national coordination, and enhance outreach and awareness.

Dr. Toombs also provided scientific leadership and coordination to the White House, Office of Science and Technology Policy, National Science and Technology Council working groups, across USDA and other federal agencies, and the agricultural community.

With over two decades of USDA service, Dr. Toombs has significantly contributed to USDA’s agricultural research, education, and Extension while serving in various leadership roles, including Division Director of Nutrition and as a National Program Leader for NIFA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. She led large competitive grant programs to fund research in nutrition, food science and technology, and food safety. These research investments include helping rural, low-income, minority, and at-risk populations make more informed food choices and become more physically active.

Dr. Toombs also was a Program Specialist for Food Science and Nutrition at the former USDA Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, now NIFA. She started at USDA as a student intern at USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. She has been repeatedly featured as one of USDA’s most impactful woman scientists and recognized by the Secretary of Agriculture for outstanding leadership.

Dr. Toombs earned a Ph.D. in Nutritional Sciences from Howard University, a Master of Science in Food Science from Alabama A&M University, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Bethune-Cookman University.
TIFFANY WIGGINS
Senior Program Success Manager at Mentor Collective

Dr. Tiffany Wiggins currently serves as Senior Program Success Manager at Mentor Collective. Prior to joining MC in 2021, Tiffany spent over a decade working in campus-based higher education administration at a number of institutions along the east coast. Dr. Wiggins holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Christopher Newport University, a Master’s degree in Human Resource Development from The George Washington University, and a PhD in Educational Leadership - Higher Education from Old Dominion University. Dr. Wiggins is also the founder of Black Girl Mentor, and host of the Black Girl Mentor podcast, which centers mentorship for Black womxn and girls. A native of Norfolk, VA, Tiffany is currently based in Raleigh, NC.
CRANOS WILLIAMS
Goodnight Distinguished Professor of Agricultural Analytics in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department at NC State University

Cranos Williams is the Goodnight Distinguished Professor of Agricultural Analytics in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department at NC State University. Williams serves as the Platform Director of the Data-Driven Plant Sciences platform of the NC Plant Sciences Initiative. He received his B.S. from NC A&T State University in 2001, and his M.S. and Ph.D. from NC State in 2002 and 2008, all in electrical engineering.
MAKOLA M. ABDULLAH
President, Virginia State University

On February 1, 2016, Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D. became the 14th President of Virginia State University (VSU).

Under President Abdullah’s leadership, Virginia State University has experienced extensive achievements and successes to include:

• Implementation of a new 2020-2025 Strategic Plan: Preeminence with Purpose to chart the University’s path to continued growth and excellence.
• A $30-million-dollar gift to VSU from philanthropist, MacKenzie Scott, the largest single donor gift in the University’s history.
• Increased 4-year graduation rate to the highest 4-year graduation rate recorded in the history of VSU.
• Implementation of a new initiative to provide free tuition for an estimated 300 Pell eligible, first-time freshmen from area high schools.
• Establishment of the John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership to assess, develop and empower African American leaders.
• Establishment of the University’s Advisory Board for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning Intersex Ally+ (LGBTQIA+)
• In June of 2018, the University was named the HBCU of the Year and awarded Best Board of Trustees of the Year and Female Student of the Year by HBCU Digest, an online blog. Additionally, in 2017, President Abdullah was named the HBCU Male President of the Year.

Dr. Abdullah is an active member on numerous boards and committees to include Chair of the Council of 1890s Presidents for Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU); Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College, and Vice Chair of the Council of Presidents for Virginia Institutions of Higher Education.

Prior to his appointment as president of Virginia State University, Dr. Abdullah served as provost and senior vice president at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Fla. (2013-2016), provost and vice president for academic affairs at Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens, Fla. (2011-2013), and dean and director of 1890 land grant programs at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Fla (2008-2011). Dr. Abdullah is a Chicago native. He earned his undergraduate degree from Howard University in civil engineering and his doctorate and master’s degrees in civil engineering from Northwestern University. He is the youngest African American to receive a Ph.D. in engineering. He is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated He and his wife, Ahkinyala Cobb-Abdullah, Ph.D., are the proud parents of a son, Mikaili, and a daughter, Sefiyetu, who both are college graduates.
JULIETTE B. BELL
Former President, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Dr. Juliette B. Bell served as the 15th president of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2018. During her tenure, UMES experienced tremendous progress including achieving reclassification as a Carnegie Doctoral University (high research); reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; construction and opening of the largest building on campus- the LEED Gold, Engineering and Aviation Science Complex; ranking as a top 10 producer of African American pharmacists; and attaining US News and World Report ranking as a Top 20 HBCU. Prior to joining UMES, Dr. Bell served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Central State University (CSU) in Ohio. Also, during her 17-year tenure at Fayetteville State University (FSU) in North Carolina, she served as professor of chemistry, Director of Biomedical Research, Founding Dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, and Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

A distinguished biochemist and scholar, Dr. Bell has earned numerous national honors and awards, including the “Millennium Award for Excellence in Teaching” from the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the NAFEO “Research Excellence Award”, the Minority Access Inc. “National Role Model Mentoring Award”, and the prestigious University of North Carolina “Board of Governors’ Award for Excellence in Teaching”. She has also been named a “Giant in Science” by the Quality Education for Minorities (QEM) and was featured as one of ten African American Life Scientists in an exhibition at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry entitled “Defying Tradition: African American Women in Science and Technology.” She was named by the Daily Record as one of Maryland’s Top 100 Women in 2014, received the Rainbow PUSH Trailblazer’s award in 2015, and the US Department of Agriculture’s Abraham Lincoln Honor Award in 2016.

Dr. Bell is a strong advocate for increasing the number of minority scientists and academic leaders. She has dedicated much of her career to providing motivation and opportunities for students to participate in scientific research, as well as mentoring and coaching future leaders. She continues to provide leadership through service to agencies, including QEM, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Millennium Leadership Initiative, National 4-H Council, and AGB Search.

Dr. Bell earned the bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Talladega College and the Ph.D. in chemistry from Atlanta University. She completed postdoctoral studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. She is a graduate of the Millennium Leadership Institute and the Harvard University Institute for Educational Management.

She currently resides with her husband in North Carolina, and together they have two adult children and five grandchildren.
HAROLD L. MARTIN SR.
Chancellor, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Harold Lee Martin Sr., Ph.D., was elected the 12th chancellor of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University on May 22, 2009, and formally began his tenure on June 8, 2009. Martin brought more than 30 years of transformative leadership experience in higher education to the role. He is the first alumnus to serve as the university’s chief executive.

Martin’s leadership has been distinguished by a focus on long-range strategic planning and tactical leadership that have dramatically improved North Carolina A&T’s standing among the nation’s land-grant, doctoral research universities, as well as among historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). The university has expanded its research contracts and grant funding, boosted its status as one of North Carolina’s top three public research institutions, reorganized its colleges and academic programs, increased endowment holdings by more than 150% and increased enrollment to be the nation’s largest HBCU, a position held since fall 2014.

Martin was heralded as an education and business thought leader in TIME magazine’s August 2020 edition of The Leadership Brief. In 2019, he was honored by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund with the Education Leadership Award, and in 2017 he was named America’s most influential HBCU leader by HBCU Digest, which came on the heels of him being named one of the Triad Business Journal’s 2016 Most Admired CEOs. In 2015, Martin was named to the EBONY Power 100 list alongside some of the nation’s most prominent African American thinkers, artists, government officials and business leaders.

Prior to his election as chancellor of N.C. A&T, Martin was senior vice president of academic affairs for the University of North Carolina System. He also served as 11th chief administrator/seventh chancellor of Winston-Salem State University and in several administrative posts at A&T including vice chancellor for the Division of Academic Affairs, dean of the College of Engineering and chairman of the Department of Electrical Engineering.

The Winston-Salem, North Carolina, native received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in electrical engineering from A&T and Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Martin and his wife Davida, the former county attorney for Forsyth County, North Carolina, have two adult sons and five grandchildren.
MORTIMER NEUFVILLE
President and CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation

Dr. Mortimer Neufville is President & CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation which represents the 19 Historically Black Land Grant Universities. Dr. Neufville has served in numerous positions in higher education, including Executive Vice President and Director of Federal Relations for the Association of Public Land Grant Universities (APLU); Dean of Agriculture, Vice President and President of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and President of Coppin State University.

He received his BS degree from Tuskegee University and his MS and PhD from the University of Florida. Dr. Neufville built a distinguished 45-year career of service, mentorship, policy development and leadership which has impacted the field of agricultural science and Education on a national and global level.

Dr. Neufville received numerous awards including an Honorary Doctor of Science from Tuskegee University, the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the University of Florida. He served as Board Chair for the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, ACDIVOCA, and was on the Board of International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC). In 2002 he was elected to the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame where he served as Board Chair. He was recently appointed to the prestigious Council of Advisors for the World Food Prize Foundation. Dr Neufville was instrumental in creating the Food System Leadership Institute (FSLI), a noteworthy point of professional pride which will create a legacy and significant contribution to our land grant universities.
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University Team

Mohamed Ahmedna  Misty Blue Terry

Antoine Alston  Paula Faulkner
Partners

Nina L Bennett  Olga Boden-Tiller  Adrian Hendricks

Ralph Noble  Jurgen Schwarz
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