A new semester is underway here at Prairie View A&M University! New students are finding their way while continuing students are rekindling relationships and also, making new ones. Whether you are a freshman, upperclassman, graduate student, faculty member, staff member, or an alum, I encourage you to enjoy campus life this fall.

Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Athletics constantly have activities happening on “The Hill”. I encourage you to attend athletic and intramural games, support your fellow Panthers, cheer them on, and stay involved. Be sure to keep abreast of academic deadlines and regularly engage with your faculty. Ask questions, focus on what is being taught, and make the best out of this semester’s lessons. I also encourage you to participate in out-of-the-classroom educational experiences as well. Seek out and apply for global and international ventures, undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, internal and external competitions and debates, and internship opportunities. I commend those who are already partaking in activities on and off campus.

Within the past month, some of our own have been selected for nationally-recognized and prestigious awards, including Ervin A. Bryant, who was chosen to be a 2017 HBCU All-Star. We also had Maria Rossana Ruiz, who won the National Technical Achievement Recognition STAR Award for Undergraduate Student Role Model by the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. A group of students traveled to California to represent our university in a national competition, the Black Enterprise 2017 BE Smart Hackathon. Be sure to look for an update in our November edition of Academic Insights! We also have students who are giving back to the community post-Harvey. If you would like to contribute in any way, the university has an official disaster relief fund set up to provide assistance to university students and employees who were affected by Hurricane Harvey. A link to the relief fund is on our website, pvamu.edu. Thank you for your generosity!

If you are a student who needs academic assistance, PVAMU’s support services are up and in full swing. Take advantage of The Testing Center, The Learning Curve, and Developmental Education, to name a few. Each one of these services, under the Office for Academic Engagement and Student Success, has the power to cultivate you into the best student you can be. Visit University College on campus to find out more.

Believe it or not, there are less than two months remaining in this semester. Seize each day, be inspired, and most importantly, finish strong! I look forward to seeing tremendous growth and opportunity from each and every one of you, as we close out 2017.

Silvia M. Nave
Online classes are nothing out of the ordinary, but a new course out of California is hoping to change the game. Dr. Luke Wood, a professor at San Diego State University’s College of Education is the mastermind behind Black Minds Matter, a free, public, eight-part course aimed at raising the national consciousness about issues facing black boys and men in education.

“The course connects themes from the Black Lives Matter movement to issues facing black boys and men in educational settings,” said Wood. “Each week, guest speakers and interviewees will share their insights, perspectives, and research on the black male educational experience, then they will show them the best strategies and practices to support their successes.”

Dr. Fred A. Bonner II, professor and endowed chair in Prairie View A&M University’s Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling is on tap to lead a session on November 6. He plans to discuss topics covered in his book, “Building on Resilience: Models and Framework of Black Male Success Across the P-20 Pipeline.”

“Being a part of this movement is so very meaningful and poignant to me because I will be able to take all that I have learned to help others be successful,” said Bonner. “Most importantly, this course will give students everywhere a platform to talk about their triumphs and struggles and how to survive.”
Grant Writing Course Available to Faculty, Staff, Students

By Marchita Shilo

Prairie View A&M University is dedicated to fulfilling its land-grant mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research, and service. And, if you are a faculty member, staff member, or student looking to expand your research goals, PVAMU has a class for that.

“My colleagues, Karen Cotton, Ramaswamy Krishnamoorthi, and I host the Grant Proposal Development Course each fall and spring,” said Dr. Michelle Gehring, a PVAMU grant writer. “Ms. Cotton established the initial framework of the course in 2015, and each year we have worked to improve and expand the content. We invite speakers to come and give seminars, and they discuss items such as library support resources, among other things. We also have professors come and share how they have been successful in obtaining funding for their research.”

Students can network and share their ideas, which is important, because, according to Gehring, funding is increasingly harder to come by these days.

“I believe everyone should ask themselves, even if they are an expert in their field, are you presenting your case in the best possible manner?” said Gehring. “This course can teach you how to “sell” your idea.”

The class is held in Delco 240 every Wednesday from 12:30 to 2 p.m. through November 1. Anyone is encouraged to stop by.

“This is the best way to get your grant writing going, and dedicating time each week to write is paramount,” said Gehring. “PVAMU is striving to become an emerging research institution, and that means we need to work on increasing the number of research dollars that we are bringing in. There are so many great ideas right here at PVAMU, and by taking this course, we are supporting our faculty, staff, and students to submit an improved quality and quantity of applications.”

Email Michelle Gehring at msgehring@pvamu.edu for more information.
Staff Members, Students Helping Those Displaced by Harvey

By Marchita Shilo

Hurricane Harvey hit Southeast Texas a little over a month ago, but recovery and disaster relief efforts are still in full swing. Staff members from Prairie View A&M University’s Cooperative Extension Program are a part of those efforts to help thousands of Texans get back on their feet.

“We have both staff and students on and off campus helping those who have been affected by the storm,” said Jimmy Henry, a program leader in the Cooperative Extension Program. “We made a commitment to Waller County, and the Commissioners Court, to keep our doors open, as long as we need to, for anyone who needs help.”

Agents are handing out fact sheets from the American Red Cross, FEMA, USDA, United Way, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and Prairie View’s Cooperative Extension Program. Each sheet details different ways residents can get help and clean up their properties after the storm.

“People are homeless, and it is going to take a while for everyone to rebuild. That is why we are here, to provide those resources, hold their hand, and walk them through the process,” said Henry. “In fact, just the other day, we had a man come in, not knowing what kind of support was out there, and we helped him apply for FEMA assistance. He also got signed up for Social Security, and if approved, he will get an extra $10,000 a year.”

Henry says, along with Waller County, people who live in Liberty, Jefferson, Chambers, Montgomery, Hardin, and Harris Counties also got assistance post-Harvey.

“Over the ten days immediately following the storm, the Cooperative Extension Program collaborated various community organizations to provide more than a thousand residents with blankets, toiletries, water, gift cards, shoes, clothes, cleaning supplies, food, and other supplies,” said Henry. “Our agents also helped register residents for FEMA and Red Cross Immediate Assistance.”

Pictured: Agents, residents, and volunteers in Liberty County.

If you need help recovering from Hurricane Harvey, stop by the Carden-Waller Cooperative Extension Program Building, the Waller County Community Center, or call 936-261-5123.
Three SREP Participants Publish Research

Prairie View A&M University hosted the Summer Research Experience Programs (SREP) for high school students (REH) and undergraduates (REU) over the summer, and three students published their research.

Miles DuBose

REH participant, Ridge Point High School


Steven Wang

REH participant, Cypress Ranch High School

**Mentor:** Dr. Fan

**Publication(s):** Alexandra Cromer, Falonne Mombogno T. Colbie, Nia Parker, Steven Wang, Hao Wu, Hua-Jun Fan, Ph.D. Square or not Square—That’s the Question! PURSUE (2017) 1(1):5-15.


Frank Garcia

REU Participant, Senior Biology Major

**Mentor:** Dr. Youngblood


\(^{\Delta}\) SREP aims to provide opportunities for undergraduate and high school students to participate in innovative, faculty-directed research to enhance their knowledge, critical thinking skills, and interest in research.
Student Attends Congressional Black Caucus Emerging Leaders Delegation in China

By Adrienne Seibert

On June 1, I embarked on my very first study abroad trip to China with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF). It truly was an honor and blessing to visit China, paid for by CBCF and the China-United States Exchange Foundation. Out of approximately 200 applicants, I, and 17 other students, partook in this amazing opportunity to study abroad in China for two weeks.

So, why China? Well, that answer is really simple: China is the world’s second largest superpower, next to the US, and the cultural exchange between the two countries is at a critical point in this new administration. I found China’s culture to be different and something that I could learn from. I wanted to better understand the relationship China has with the US and the challenges that it faces, as it is developing rapidly. I wanted to take the opportunity to expand my global perspective and challenge my ability to adapt to a new environment.

It has always been a goal of mine to study abroad while in school, but the opportunity had not presented itself until now. What genuinely lit the fire inside of me to study abroad was a discussion on having a global mindset, given by an Ernst & Young (a major public accounting firm) recruiter, and how study abroad can positively impact your mind, the work you perform, and your cultural awareness. In that moment, it clicked. Studying abroad is so much more than getting on a plane and sightseeing. It is how you are physically able to take in where you are, learn, and experience something completely different from what you know, and apply that to your own life.

As my trip came to a close, I had the opportunity to reflect. I finally accomplished a goal I had since I was in high school. I completely immersed myself in another culture and came back to the US cultured, extremely adaptable, and incredibly open-minded. I am thankful for the opportunity to have traveled with this group of intelligent students. It is becoming more important for me to help other students realize that traveling outside of the country and experience another culture is something very essential to personal growth. Traveling outside of our cities and states should now be something expected of us to do.

Pictured: Students from Prairie View A&M University, Howard University, North Carolina A&T University, Florida A&M University, Morehouse College, Hampton University, Alcorn State University, North Carolina Central University, and South Carolina State University.

Adrienne Seibert is a senior accounting major. She currently serves as president of PVAMU’s NABA and Beta Alpha Psi chapters.
PVAMU Hosts Inaugural G.A.L.S. Camp

By Marchita Shilo

Prairie View A&M University hosted its first-ever G.A.L.S. (Girls Accelerating and Learning STEM) Camp this summer. Drs. Felecia Nave, Audie Thompson, Sherri Frizzell, and Rochelle Williams led the residential camp from July 16-21.

“We had a total of 20 rising 9th through 11th graders participate in the camp,” said Williams, a research scientist at PVAMU. “A majority of them were from the Houston area, but we also had some of the girls come from as far away as Dallas and Mississippi.”

Students spent the week working on team-building projects in mechanical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, and computer science. In addition to focusing on the technical skills required for each project, professional skill development was a key component of the camp. This included an emphasis on teamwork, oral communication, and understanding the broader impacts of the projects on society. Students also got a chance to go on a field trip to General Electric’s Oil & Gas facility in Houston to participate in team competitions, and present their work at a closing ceremony.

“For me, going to these types of camps when I was younger played a major role in my decision to pursue an engineering degree,” said Williams. “Research has shown that the earlier you expose young girls to math and science, the more likely they are to go into a STEM discipline. Being exposed to STEM camps at an early age allows them to imagine possibilities, they get to ask questions, and most importantly, seeing so many women in academia and the industry leaves a positive impression on them.”

To find out more information about G.A.L.S. Camp, email rlwilliams@pvamu.edu.
Prairie View A&M University’s campus is buzzing this fall. That’s because “The Hill” welcomed a more than two-thousand new faces.

According to the official 20th day of class report, PVAMU had 2,074 incoming freshmen. A year ago, the university had 1,839 freshmen, in 2015, there were 1,627, and in 2014, there were 1,569 freshmen. So, what changed? For starters, PVAMU established partnerships, or Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), with 19 school districts in the state. MOUs are designed to help bring in top-performing students, and it’s working. Over the last three years, the percentage of PVAMU’s incoming freshmen who graduated in the top 25 percent of their high school class increased from 18 percent to 22 percent.

PVAMU’s Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships is also playing a big role in the ever-growing freshman class size. A few months ago, the office reported awarding a record number of scholarships and financial aid earlier than in past years. “Let’s just say, a lot of kids in high school were very happy,” Ralph Perri, director of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, said in May.

To seal the deal, the university’s Summer Bridge programs are giving freshmen enrollment a boost. This past summer, more than 800 students enrolled.

“The university’s commitment to increasing the number of Summer Bridge programs for our incoming freshmen is playing a critical role in our enrollment and retention success,” said John Gardner, assistant vice president for Academic Engagement and Student Success. “Students are able to earn six to 12 hours of college-level coursework towards their degree, depending on the Summer Bridge program. In addition to the coursework, students experience college residential living, with fewer distractions, while creating networks with students, faculty, staff, and administrators. These opportunities really lure more students to make that final decision to come to PV.”
in case you missed it...

College of Agriculture and Human Sciences Hosts Research Seminar Series
September 13, 2017

Students and colleagues attended Drs. Ali Fares and Ripendra Awal’s presentation entitled: Hurricane Harvey: Facts, Lessons, and Research Opportunities.

Some of the points discussed:
What role can PVAMU and CAHS play in predicting, mitigating and adopting to flooding and extreme events? What are the research opportunities available to educate stakeholders about flood in collaboration with state and federal agencies? Does the Water Team of the PVAMU-CAHS Cooperative Agricultural Research Center have the expertise to deal with these flood related issues? How can we get ready for the 43rd Hurricane and beyond?

The presentation is archived at livestream.com/pvamucahs.

Students Take Part in CRI Computational Biology & Bioinformatics Seminar
September 14, 2017

PVAMU’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering invited Dr. Anna Joy, a research assistant professor at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, to speak to students and faculty members about cancer research.

According to Joy, “We need this collaboration between the biology and engineering fields because engineers know how to transform our data into formulas that can help people.”
Professors, Students Attend TAMU Economics Conference

September 22-23, 2017

Drs. Gbenga Ojumu and Lawrence McNeil, along with five students from PVAMU’s Hispanic Business Student Association, attended Texas A&M University’s 11th Annual ASHE Conference (Economic Issues Affecting African American and Hispanic Communities). Ojumu and McNeil gave a presentation of their upcoming paper entitled, “Innovation and Business Development: A Multi-Group Perspective.”

“This conference was important for our students to attend because it highlighted important economic issues related to the Hispanic and African American communities,” said McNeil. “As an added bonus, at least two of the students who attended the conference are now considering graduate degrees in economics, given what they learned at the conference and their interactions with the other conference participants.”

MACH-III Continues ‘Building on Resilience’ Lecture Series

September 28, 2017

PVAMU’s MACH-III, Minority Achievement, Creativity, and High Ability Center, invited Dr. David O. Stovall, professor of Educational Policy Studies and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, to lead a lecture in the second installment of its Building on Resilience Lecture Series.

“Dr. Stovall is a social justice, “activist-scholar,” and his thought-provoking talk, “The Radical Project of Resistance and Resilience: Love and Self-Care in Troubling Times,” was both insightful and powerful to all who attended,” said Dr. Fred A. Bonner II, executive director of the MACH-III Center.
October 2 20th Class Day
October 13 Deadline to Apply Late for Fall 2017 Graduation
October 16 Final Examinations, Last Day of Class (1st 8-Week Session)
October 17 First Day of Class (2nd 8-Week Session)
October 19-21 Mid-Semester Examination Period
October 24 Mid-Semester Grades Due (Fall 2017); Final Grades Due (1st 8-Week Session)
November 14 Priority Registration Period Begins for Spring 2018
November 17 Deadline to Apply for Spring 2018 Graduation
November 23-25 Thanksgiving Holiday (University Closed)
December 4-5 Course Review Days
December 5 Last Day of Class; Last Day to Withdraw from University for Fall 2017 Semester; Last Day to Apply for Fall 2017 Degree Conferral
December 6-12 Final Examinations
December 13 Final Grades Due for Graduating Candidates
December 16 Commencement
December 19 Final Grades Due

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is accepting applications for the 2018 Ford Foundation Fellowships Programs for Achieving Excellence in College and University Teaching. Awardees will receive up to $45,000 and have expenses paid to attend at least one Conference of Ford Fellows. Approximately 65 predoctoral, 36 dissertation, and 24 postdoctoral fellowships will be awarded.

Full eligibility information and online applications are available at nationalacademies.org/ford.
Commencement Convocation
DECEMBER 16, 2017

PROVOST’S WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP LECTURE SERIES KICKOFF
Fall 2017

ACADEMIC INSIGHTS
Submit story ideas, send feedback, or contact us!

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Attention: Marchita Shilo, Communications Specialist

Felecia M. Nave, Ph.D., Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs