There have been several new applications and software packages introduced within the past year.

On the research front, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Sponsored Programs recently selected 54 undergraduate students for funding. Each awardee can work up to 20 hours per week on her or his research project for the academic year receiving $12 an hour. In addition, each award comes with $500 that can be used for research supplies and travel. The list of awardees is posted at pvamu.edu/research/wp-content/uploads/sites/60/UGR-Selection-List-for-Web01172019.pdf.

There are several more exciting events happening on “The Hill,” with many covered in this issue of Academic Insights and online at pvamu.edu. We look forward to receiving your feedback in the coming weeks.

On Tuesday, Feb. 19, Prairie View A&M University hosts a grand opening for the School of Architecture’s Fabrication Design Center. The ribbon-cutting ceremony takes place at 11 a.m. followed by a reception and tour of this new campus building. More details about the Fabrication Center are enclosed in this issue, as well as additional information about a design reward the center recently received.

On Thursday, Feb. 21, the University hosts its third Scholars’ Voices Series event. Alumnus and historian W. Gabriel Selassie I will lead this month’s lecture from the Don K. Clark Auditorium. Last month, PVAMU hosted Cornel West, and Nell Irvin Painter visited in the fall.

Looking ahead to the summer, three PVAMU students, sophomores Morgan Green and Alexandria White and senior Ashley Tolliver, will study abroad as receivers of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. The Gilman Scholarship is a government-sponsored program which awards up to $5,000 per student. We will be sure to highlight their exciting experiences in South Africa, Italy, and Thailand respectively.

Last month, the Northwest Houston Center held a Library Open House to introduce several enhancements, including new computers, printers, accessibility software, a new circulation system and searching software, and additional books, among other items. On the main campus this week, Tech Week has been instrumental in providing PVAMU’s faculty, staff, and administrators opportunities to learn more about the IT resources available.
I am so excited to be at PV again. This is an opportunity to create a model African American Studies Program from the unique perspective of an HBCU. It’s also an opportunity to come home to Houston and to PV to help educate and mentor students who come from the same places as me. I feel like I am walking in the footsteps of my ancestors whose mission was to create a space that centered on black education and culture. I am really grateful to be here.”
Alumni Use Decades of Industry Experience to Teach Younger Generations

By Marchita Shilo

Two Prairie View A&M University alumni are making an impact in PVAMU’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Horace St. Julian (’71) and Vewiser “VJ” Turner (’80) are instructors who came out of retirement to teach. St. Julian has over four decades of experience from working at companies like AT&T, IBM, Cooper Industries, and Raytheon. Prior to his time in corporate America, St. Julian taught classes at PVAMU.

“Saint actually taught me a class in electrical engineering when I was a student at PV,” said Turner. “He also taught Dr. Kelvin Kirby, who serves as a department head now, Roy G. Perry, the college’s namesake, and Annette Moore, who is the chief information officer at Johnson Space Center. They were a few years ahead of me, but it was a magical time and a great collection of students. There were also many others who all went on to be very successful professionals.”

After graduating from Prairie View, Turner worked at ExxonMobil for 35 years before retiring at an executive level. Like St. Julian, he knew he had to come back to “The Hill” to share his skillsets in engineering and corporate professionalism to help future generations.

“I bring back real-world examples of how our classroom topics are being used in industry,” said Turner. “Plus, as alumni, it’s even more critical that we give back. We all have some knowledge, some lessons learned, and experiences that could be very helpful to our students. If we all stopped for just a little bit to help build some bridges, it would help those students coming behind us to be more prepared once they graduate.”

“Teaching is probably the most rewarding career of all time,” said St. Julian. “Having students enter my classroom and exit at the end of the semester at a higher level is exciting. The icing on the cake is knowing that I am teaching fellow Panthers. It doesn’t get any better than that.”
Architecture Professor to Use AIA Grant to Help Portion of Houston’s Aging Population

By Marchita Shilo

The American Institute of Architects’ Design for Aging Knowledge Community selected Assistant Professor Jessica April Ward in Prairie View A&M University’s School of Architecture as a 2019-2020 AIA Design for Aging Fellow. As a fellow, Ward will use a $10,000 grant to further research being done in PVAMU’s Regenerative Design Studio course – one of the classes she teaches.

“My research assistant Towana Davilmar and I will present this research at the Environments for Aging Expo & Conference at the end of the two-year period,” said Ward. “We look forward to connecting with a national knowledge community in the architectural profession whose mission is to ‘foster design innovation and disseminate knowledge necessary to enhance the built environment and quality of life for an aging society.’”

So what exactly does Ward and Davilmar’s research entail?

“The project focuses on finding evidence-based regenerative design solutions for residents who are Aging in Post Disaster Neighborhoods who have been exposed to extended periods of environmental injustice and mega-storm damage. In August 2017, Hurricane Harvey hit Houston and left behind widespread devastation. The most vulnerable populations affected were seniors and young families with children,” said Ward.

The project should provide long-term housing solutions needed for effective disaster recovery.

“The short-term benefits will happen when students and seniors share stories, work together and educate each other through the project. Co-designing their spaces and housing solutions, and giving them a voice in their future and legacy is an important requirement of just design. Of course, I have to thank Pastor T. Leon Preston II at Yale Street Baptist Church for facilitating the community-based component of the research,” said Ward. “In regards to this project overall, I’m honored to receive support and acknowledgment from the AIA. It is also great to be included in a cohort whose research focuses on the environment, with resident quality of life and wellness being at the forefront.”
Students at H.T. Jones Elementary in Prairie View returned from their holiday break to a massive surprise at their school. Community leaders broke ground on a new greenhouse and community garden on the school’s playground.

The collaboration known as the NextGEN (gardening, education, nutrition) Project, a partnership between Jones Elementary, the City of Prairie View and Prairie View A&M University’s College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, will allow students and residents to grow plants and learn proper techniques in farming and agriculture. Corporate partner East Texas Precast provided donations for the initial phase of the project, which resulted in raised cement garden beds and soil installation. That means students were able to plant seeds as soon as they returned to school.

The City of Prairie View Mayor, David Allen, Prairie View’s Police Chief, Anthony Solomon, CAHS Dean and Director of Land Grant Programs, Dr. Gerard D’Souza, and PVAMU Veterinary Assistant Chandra Adams were all present for the donation. Adams, who has played an integral role in organizing the team to work on the project, said she was enthused about its progress. She said the greenhouse and garden would open a new world to Jones Elementary students. “(The team is) doing a great job so far and it’s just been an exciting project. I can’t wait to see the kids when they start to plant and get their hands involved. We’re getting them more involved with agriculture and teaching them from the soil to the table.”

Mayor Allen said he was also excited about the project and the vast potential it has to educate students and expand the relationships between participating agencies. “We’re looking to build, start, and enhance relations between the city, the university and the business community. Relationships like these are paramount. With Jones being at the foot of the university, it should be one of the premier elementary schools in the country.”

The project will continue throughout the Spring of 2019 with the next phase being the construction of a hoop-house.
Professor Receives A&M System’s Regents Professor Award

By Marchita Shilo

Dr. Lijun Qian, AT&T Endowed Professor in Prairie View A&M University’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, received The Texas A&M University System’s Regents Professor Award. Along with Qian, the Board of Regents designated 14 other faculty members and seven agency service, extension or research professionals within the A&M System as Regents Professors and Regents Fellows for 2017-2018. Each year, the A&M System’s Board of Regents honors professors who have had exemplary performances in teaching, research, and service.

“These outstanding individuals are doing incredible work on behalf of the A&M System and the entire state of Texas,” said A&M System Chancellor John Sharp. “They exemplify the values and commitment to excellence that defines the A&M System, and I am grateful for their dedication.”

During Qian’s 15-year tenure at PVAMU, he has played a leadership role in developing the Ph.D. program in Electrical Engineering and establishing the five-year BS/MS program. He has secured more than $15 million in research funding for the university and created PVAMU’s Center of Excellence in Research and Education for Big Military Data Intelligence (CREDIT Center) where he serves as principal investigator and director.

"The Regents Award is the highest honor granted to a faculty member by the A&M System," said Dr. James Palmer, interim provost and senior vice president of Academic Affairs at PVAMU. “Dr. Qian and the team at the CREDIT Center are leading developments at PVAMU in big data science and deep learning for artificial intelligence (AI),” he added. “This effort is transforming our university into a leader in big data science and AI.”

“I am very encouraged by this recognition,” Qian said, “and I am looking forward to continuing our efforts to improve teaching, research, and service at PVAMU further.”

The Board established the Regents Professor Awards program in 1996 and the Regents Fellow Service Awards program in 1998. To date, 239 A&M system faculty members have received the Regents Professor Award, with 142 agency professionals having earned the Regents Fellow Service Award. The award carries with it a monetary stipend of $15,000.
More than two dozen members of the Waller Area Chamber of Commerce attended a presentation on “Bitcoins, Cryptocurrencies and Blockchain Technology” on Jan. 16. Dr. Hesam Shahriari, assistant professor of finance at Prairie View A&M University, led the workshop, which was well-received.

Dr. Angela Broadus, Training Specialist at the Texas Juvenile Crime Prevention Center at Prairie View A&M University, was featured in the American Psychological Association’s Society of Addiction Psychology Fall 2018 newsletter, SoAP Box. SoAP Box is released three times a year and features articles relevant to the science and practice of addiction psychology, as well as information about ongoing SoAP activities and announcements from SoAP leadership, SoAP committee chairs, and SoAP members.

You can view Broadus’ full feature at addictionpsychology.org/soap-box/2018/fall/early-career-psychoanalyst-spotlight-angela-d-broadus-phd.

Dr. Sesha Kethineni, professor in Prairie View A&M University’s Department of Justice Studies, recently started focusing her research on cryptocurrency and its involvement in criminal activities. She and graduate student Ying Cao published their first peer-reviewed article on the topic Use of Bitcoin in Darknet Markets: Examining Facilitative Factors on Bitcoin-Related Crimes in the “American Journal of Criminal Justice.” This article is one of the most read articles on Blockchain. Kethineni and Cao’s second article, The Rise of Popularity of Cryptocurrency and Associated Criminal Activity, is published in the “International Criminal Justice Review.” Kethineni continues to expand her research on the topic and submitted a book chapter on Cyber Crime in India: Legislative Framework in “The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyberdeviance.”

Finance Professor Leads Technology Workshop for Waller Area Chamber of Commerce

More than two dozen members of the Waller Area Chamber of Commerce attended a presentation on “Bitcoins, Cryptocurrencies and Blockchain Technology” on Jan. 16. Dr. Hesam Shahriari, assistant professor of finance at Prairie View A&M University, led the workshop, which was well-received.
On May 9, Dr. Mark Tschaepe, associate professor of philosophy at Prairie View A&M University, Christian Farley, graduating senior honors student at PVAMU, and Michael Zhou, junior at Cypress Ranch High School, will present the research session "How Did This Become a Medical Desert?" at the National Rural Health Association’s 42nd Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The session will display their engaging research on healthcare in Waller County. Tschaepe, who leads the research team, will give an overview of why he initiated the research, some of the general findings, and suggestions for future work. Additionally, he will present concerns about ethical considerations and rural health in Waller County.

Farley will discuss his experiences with administering healthcare surveys in Waller County, including discoveries he made through the process. Farley said, "Many of those surveyed, who verbally expressed concern regarding access to healthcare, did not know the problem could be fixed or properly addressed." Zhou will present his archival research on the histories of the two hospitals in Waller County, the Prairie View hospital and the Hempstead hospital, both of which closed nearly 30 years ago.

Regarding what he wants others to learn from his participation in the conference, Zhou said, "I would want people to know how critical the health situation in Waller County is." From his research, Zhou determined that the need for a hospital (in Waller County) is apparent.

"This is an exciting opportunity for a faculty member, undergraduate student, and an area high school student to represent Prairie View and Waller County at a national conference," expressed Farley. "As someone interested in working in healthcare in a rural community, I want to leave the conference with a better understanding of the problems rural healthcare faces."

Zhou said, "I would like to hear other people's perspectives on how rural life is. I live in a suburban area by Houston, and I rarely get a look into rural areas. I find that understanding more about other people's perspectives and lives make me more understanding as a person."

According to the National Rural Health Association website, "NRHA's Annual Rural Health Conference is the nation's largest rural health conference, created for anyone with an interest in rural healthcare, including rural health practitioners, hospital administrators, clinic directors and lay health workers, social workers, state and federal health employees, academics, community members and more."
WHAT: High-impact practices, or HIPs, are active learning practices that promote deep learning through student engagement. Educational research suggests HIPs increase rates of student retention and success. Some examples of HIPs include first-year experiences, undergraduate research, global learning, community-based learning, writing-intensive courses, common curricular experiences, internships, and collaborative assignments. These practices add quality to an educational program. They also increase the rigor of studies allowing students to apply learning to real-world problems, integrate classroom and co-curricular experiences, and broaden their perspectives.

WHEN: Many HIPs are already being implemented at Prairie View A&M University. As these practices are strengthened, we should see a higher number of students complete more classes and finish their degrees. We should also see students develop marketable skills they can use to get careers that matter to them.

WHERE: Examples of where HIPs have been implemented at PVAMU include, but are not limited to:

- The Pre-Medical Concepts Institute, which is sponsored by the Biology Department, is a learning community that gives students a head start to their college experiences. They can earn credit hours in the summer leading into the fall semester, providing a bridge into their first year. As a cohort, students support each other throughout the program.

- University College is a living and learning community for first-year students with centralized advising, supportive mentors, and tailored programing for academic success.

- The Office of Research, Innovation, and Sponsored Programs has supported around 45 undergraduate researchers to work on projects throughout the year. The students present at the annual research symposium sponsored by the College of Juvenile Justice and Psychology.

- The Office of Career Services assists students as they apply for internships while also helping to coordinate their experiences. A recent addition is the Panthers on Capitol Hill Internship Program. Career Services, the D.C. Alumni Chapter, and the PVAMU Foundation supports student interns while they are in D.C. In addition, Career Services collaborates with the Office of Student Employment to manage the S.T.E.P. Internship Program, which supports summer internships on PVAMU’s main campus.

- PVAMU has a robust study abroad office to support global learning and international travel. Students can go to a number of countries independently or participate in faculty-led experiences.

- The Office of Student Engagement supports students in participating in community service activities and course-based service learning experiences. A volunteer services coordinator also helps faculty design appropriate service learning experiences.

WHY: High-Impact Practices are common among four-year and community colleges because they work. There are some case studies available at aacu.org/resources/high-impact-practices.
Rachel Williams (’18) is the first alumna to represent Prairie View A&M University as an HBCU Fellow at Columbia University’s School of Professional Studies. She just wrapped up the first of three semesters at the school in New York City.

“I graduated from PVAMU with a degree in business management, but I’ve always wanted to pursue a career in communications and saw this as a great opportunity. After researching Columbia’s strategic communication program and its course load, I felt intrigued to further my pursuits,” said Williams. “Additionally, I have lived in Texas my whole life and have always wanted an out-of-state school experience, so I knew this would be a holistic growing experience for me, which, I can honestly say it has been.”

The fellowship includes housing and full tuition for one of eight master’s degree programs. Each fellow also receives career coaching and guidance, community service and access to a 2,500-plus member Columbia alumni network.

“A few months after I started, we took a trip to Washington D.C. where we met with Johnathan Holifield, executive director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs, and Johnny C. Taylor, president and chief executive officer of the Society For Human Resource Management (SHRM) and chairman of the President’s Board of Advisors on HBCUs,” said Williams. “I believe that with this program the importance of HBCUs will become highlighted even more, it will show that we have great talent to offer to the world and that we belong and can thrive outside of HBCUs.”

Fellows have to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or better throughout the program. The 2018 cohort of 21 students will graduate in August 2019.
Loushay Davis ('18)
is a proud new Prairie View A&M University alumna who has overcome a lot in her days. She was born 25 weeks premature, weighing only one pound. Growing up, she had to deal with epilepsy, cerebral palsy, and asthma, to name a few. But she did not let challenges with her health prevent her from getting an education.

"The school district I attended tried to label me, but my mother saw my potential and fought for me," said Davis. "I knew since the age of 3 that I wanted to work in healthcare, so I went to college. I started as a nursing major at PVAMU but eventually transitioned to psychology since it was such a broad field to specialize in."

Before obtaining her psychology degree, Davis endured some hardships in her last year, including the death of her grandmother who was a significant supporter.

"I battled depression and anxiety with the passing of my grandma who practically raised me and talked with me all day and every day. I also worked a full-time job and pledged Zeta Phi Beta Sorority while managing an 18-hour course load. I had to keep my faith in God because I felt like a black cloud was over me during that time."

She prevailed and wrapped up both spring and fall semesters with a grade point average over 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

"During the fall semester, I took on an even more intense load of 21 hours while working, but I made it. I saw, I came, I conquered," said Davis.

▶ This spring, Davis started her journey to earn a master’s in business administration with a concentration in healthcare management.
With a grand opening ceremony planned for this month, Prairie View A&M University’s newly constructed Fabrication Design Center won a design award from the Houston chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Twelve projects located in the Houston metropolitan area received the award, which is based on the quality of design, resolution of the program idea, sustainable responsibility, innovation, thoughtfulness, and technique of the structures.

“The long hours spent with Kirksey Architects over this past year and the feedback they received from us paid off,” said Ikhlas Sabouni, dean of PVAMU’s School of Architecture. “We insisted on a high-quality design coupled with functional direction from our faculty and students. The result was a winning design.”

The Fabrication Center housed under PVAMU’s School of Architecture features a variety of equipment allowing students to build, develop and test their design ideas using the most advanced technology in the market.

“In addition to traditional equipment, the new Fabrication Center has several digital tools such as laser cutters, 3D printers, a robotic arm, and a 10-ton crane. Additionally, it has a photo shop and a print shop digital media lab,” said Sabouni. “The center is designed to prepare students to be experts in using the latest technology in designing, fabricating, and constructing buildings. It will also provide opportunities for faculty and students to conduct research related to materials, sustainability, affordability, and new construction techniques that can benefit the school, the design and building industry, and the community.”

The opening day of PVAMU’s Fabrication Design Center is February 19, with a ribbon cutting planned for 11 a.m.
Nearly 600 students walked across the stage at the Berry Center of Northwest Houston to obtain their degrees. Entertainment Executive Debra L. Lee gave the event’s address, encouraging all PVAMU graduates to “be courageous.” Her full speech is posted at pvamu.edu.
in case you missed it...

Tournament of Roses Parade

January 1, 2019

Members of the Marching Storm’s drumline, along with other HBCU drumline members from across the nation, opened up the 130th Rose Parade (presented by Honda) in Pasadena, California. Millions of people watched the telecast worldwide.
in case you missed it...

Symposium: Scholars' Voices Series: African American Culture and History

January 18, 2019

Political activist, author, and public intellect Cornel West was the second speaker of PVAMU’s Scholars’ Voices Series (African-American Historian Nell Irvin Painter spoke first in October). You can watch his full lecture on PVAMU’s Facebook page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Application period begins for tuition rebate for spring graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>undergraduate candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 7</td>
<td>Mid-semester exams begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Final exams (Spring 2019 1st 8-week session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 11-16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Final grades due (Spring 2019 1st 8-week session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>First day of class (Spring 2019 2nd 8-week session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>Mid-semester grades due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 25</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from course(s) without academic record (Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019 2nd 8-week session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 27</td>
<td>Founders’ Day/Honors Recognition Convocation; Last day to apply for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spring graduation (ceremony participation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>Application period begins for degree conferral only for spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>graduation (no ceremony participation or name listed in program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Priority registration begins for continuing students for summer and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fall semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Pre-registration begins for all students for summer and fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>Good Friday (student holiday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 29-30</td>
<td>Course review days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 30</td>
<td>Last day to apply for degree conferral only for spring graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(no ceremony participation or name listed in program); Last day to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>submit application for tuition rebate for spring graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(undergraduate candidates only); Last day of class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACADEMIC INSIGHTS**

Submit story ideas or feedback!

**OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

academicinsights@pvamu.edu | 936-261-2175

Attention: Marchita Shilo, Communications Specialist

James M. Palmer, Ph.D., Interim Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
SYMPOSIUM:
Scholars’ Voices Series

African American Culture and History at Prairie View A&M University

featuring

W. GABRIEL SELASSIE I, ’88
Ralph Bunche Associate Professor for History and African American Studies
Los Angeles City College

FEBRUARY 21, 2019

5th Annual Essay/Oratory Contest themed: “GROWING GLOBAL CITIZENS AT HBCUs” is now underway.

Feb 11 - Essay submission
Feb 20 - Finalists notified
Feb 27 - Finalists oration

1st Place - $2500
2nd Place - $2000
3rd Place - $1500

For more details, go to PVAMU.EDU.

FOUNDERS’ DAY AND HONORS RECOGNITION CONVOCATION

MARCH 27 2019

VIRTUAL SAFE WALK 24/7

In 5 easy steps, you can set a virtual safety timer to have your friends and family watch over you for an added layer of security.

DOWNLOAD RAVE GUARDIAN TODAY

Download on the App Store  GET IT ON Google Play