

Out of quarantine, RA doesn't know how he tested positive

Mariah Wiggs

Staff Writer

There is a natural scare factor that comes with testing positive for COVID-19. Not knowing where or when you could have contracted the virus, or who you could have infected, leaves a trail of questions running through your head.

Florida A&M University student Jairus Williams had all these questions and more when he tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 9.

"I was upset," said Williams. "I felt some type of way towards myself because out of all the precautionary measures I tried to make sure I completed, I still managed to get COVID. I also knew that being in quarantine meant being away from the people I cared about and hung with daily."

Williams was tested as part of a biweekly routine for all Resident Assistants on FAMU's campus. He received his results that Friday afternoon while working his desk shift. With no immediate symptoms or harsh illnesses, Williams considered himself asymptomatic — producing or showing no symptoms.

The protocol for students living on



Photo courtesy Williams

Jairus Williams experienced quarantine on campus after testing positive for COVID. Photo courtesy Williams

campus who test positive is for them to quarantine in Palmetto North for 10 consecutive days. Metz Food Services also provides meals throughout the day for each student.

Williams knew he would be taken care of moving forward; but he also felt the responsibility to inform those he was around leading up to his results. This way they could get tested.

"When he told our friend group, we were so shocked and sad," senior Resident Assistant and close friend Ciara Brown said.

Brown spent quite a bit of time with Williams leading up to his results. With the same testing requirements applying to her as a Resident Assistant, Brown got tested the day before. Her results came back negative.

According to Williams, all those he associated with came back with negative test results. Not only that, those same friends took it upon themselves to look after him, in the safest way they could, while Williams was in quarantine.

"It was just my duty to do what a friend was supposed to do," Brown said. "Jairus is my brother. If that was talking to him for hours on FaceTime or bringing him food and having to drop it off in the weirdest ways because we had to stay distant. He is a super social person, so we had to

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COVID and anxiety: Two sides of same coin

Aolani Brown

Layout Editor

Despite the novel coronavirus currently wrecking global havoc, a mischievous sidekick has tip-toed its way into our peripheral of wellness and into the bodies of people all over the world — anxiety.

While the coronavirus has spread like wildfire with the pandemic's death toll rising just above 1 million world-wide and 200,000 in this country, public anxiety is spreading even faster. COVID-19 has brought about a surge of psychosomatic illnesses with symptoms mirroring those of the virus itself.

According to Patient.info, a psychosomatic disorder is a "disease which involves both mind and body." Physical ailments can be easily aggravated by an increase in mental unrest — something often associated with factors such as anxiety and stress.

In an interview with The New York Times, Dr. Toni Goodykoontz, assistant professor of psychiatry for WVU Medicine, attributed many of the symptoms that adults claim to have to psychosomatic disturbances.

"Adults complain of things like headaches, fatigue, just a general feeling of unwellness," Goodykoontz said. "Part of it is patients will start to imagine that they may have the virus, but most don't recognize that this is all a manifestation of the fact that they are so overwhelmed and stressed by what's going on."

People struggling with anxiety during the coronavirus outbreak may find themselves in a harmful cycle, one in which they stress about the virus and in turn cause themselves to feel sick — thus increasing their anxiety.



Photo courtesy Aolani Brown

The coronavirus pandemic has increased psychosomatic illness in those that suffer with anxiety.

A June 2020 scientific journal by Stefanie M. Jungmann and Michael Witthoft observed the correlations between anxiety, cyberchondria (unfounded anxiety that results from looking up illnesses online), and COVID-19, and found positive associations.

"The findings suggest that trait health anxiety and cyberchondria serve as risk factors, whereas information about the pandemic and adaptive emotion regulation might represent buffering factors for anxiety during a virus pandemic," Jungmann and Witthoft found.

Aside from these relations, there are many symptoms shared by both general anxiety disorders and the coronavirus that could further aggravate the mental state of someone suffering from a psychosomatic illness.

Chest pain, nausea, shortness of breath, chills, and headache are some of the symptoms that can be noted in both a panic attack and a case of the novel coronavirus, according to Medical News Today.

This dilemma leaves the question of what one could possibly do to combat an

illness that has manifested from their own thoughts and anxieties.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises those struggling with stress to take care of their emotional and physical health, take breaks from pandemic related news, and make time to unwind.

Understanding the facts and ignoring the falsities regarding the coronavirus can help make this time less stressful, reduce harmful stigma, and protect one's psychosomatic state.

Some students desperate for more financial aid

Ariyon Dailey

Editor-in-Chief

There's no question that Florida A&M students still need the same amount of funds that would've been granted pre-coronavirus.

Now, the Office of Financial Aid is allowing students to apply for additional assistance funding.

With travel and access to the physical campus limited due to COVID-19, students are taking classes all across the country. Some are learning from their homes in Tallahassee or their hometowns.

Even with location changes, tuition prices remain the same.

The additional financial assistance will be awarded to students based upon the university's objectives regarding recruitment, retention, diversity, service and an applicant's unmet financial need, according to the electronic application.

Many students shared that the award could help them in multiple areas, if they're lucky.

Morgan Walton is a sophomore, public relations major who is having trouble finding scholarships to assist in her school fees.

"It's expensive to go to college and COVID is taking a lot of hits to finances, and I'm not on scholarship. I was advised to apply for it [additional financial assistance]," Walton said.

Walton is an in-state student paying out of pocket and is forced to take out loans.

Damir Hartfield, a sophomore psychology major and Marching 100 member who resides in FAMU Towers. He is saddled with a meal plan, in-state tuition



Photo by Ariyon Dailey

Four FAMU students with financial aid problems.

and band fees.

"Everything up here is expensive. I have a small little job but I don't get much tips and I don't get any support financial-ly from my family," Hartfield said.

Hartfield wants to receive any money that can help and would like to purchase items for his dorm like pots, a microwave and books for his classes.

To put things into perspective, Hartfield says his total fees this semester are

about \$7,300 and he's only received about \$3,000 in federal grants.

Hartfield's situation is similar to most students with federal aid that only covers a percent of what they owe.

According to Nerd Wallet Data Analyst Elizabeth Renter, student loans now make up a larger portion of how lower-income students pay for college over federal grants.

In the study, Renter explained how

side jobs for students just don't cut it any-more with the tuition prices of today.

On the other hand, transfer sophomore economics major Takayla Perry is an out-of-state student and says she thinks tuition prices should be lowered, due to the pandemic crisis.

"That causes a lot of unnecessary stress, still having to pay the full amount. Most of our classes are fully virtual," Perry said.

Perry is active in the Transfer Student Association and many of them, especially those from out of state, feel the same.

The tuition rate for out-of-state students living off campus is \$33,996, according to FAMU's Office of Financial Aid.

"The money would most definitely go toward them access codes. I still have to pay for it because my financial aid was delayed," Perry said.

Perry explained how she lost money after having to stay in her hometown of Milwaukee, after being told students cannot return after spring break in March. She was forced to still pay her rent and fees in Tallahassee, even though she would be stuck in Milwaukee for four months.

Many students would like the additional funding to go toward their rent, class resources and tuition, but there are also expenses outside of the college realm.

Ashley Laurent, a senior music industry major, owes two medical bills that she is saving to pay.

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Students oppose DeSantis' 'anti-protest' legislation

Amari Jarrell

Staff Writer

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has proposed legislation that would bring criminal offenses of up to third-degree felonies and jail time to anyone law enforcement finds participating in disorderly assemblies and partaking in violence.

DeSantis said the proposal, which is called the Combatting Violence, Disorder and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act, would establish criminal penalties for actions such as obstructing traffic, destroying public property, protesting without a permit and harassing a person at a restaurant.

The bill states that any driver who hits a person who is obstructing traffic during an unpermitted protest will not be liable for injury or death "if fleeing from the safety of a mob."

Mia Chatman, a fourth year pre-physical therapy student at FAMU, had much to say regarding this proposal. "I just

don't understand why drivers who run their cars through [us] protesters are able to get away with it. It's very ironic that this was included in this bill considering that a driver ran his car through a crowd of peaceful protesters and had not been charged."

In this bill, DeSantis stated that any local government which "slashes the budget for law enforcement services" will not be allowed any state grants or aid.

He makes it clear that "defunding the police" will not be tolerated.

This proposal would be the strictest reaction in the country to ongoing protests and demonstrates.

Taylor Jackson, a fourth year business administration student at FAMU, believes that this bill is designed to stop the momentum that the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining. "This bill is trying to silence our movement. We



Photo courtesy floridatrend.com
Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

are protesting for the many injustices at the hands of law enforcement for the innocent lives lost. If this governor really cared about stopping violence, why not propose bills against those law enforcement officers, and holding them more accountable for their actions."

DeSantis said the legislation will allow the state of Florida to use RICO liability against anyone who organizes or funds these kinds of "disorderly assemblies."

He said at a news conference in Polk County that what was happening in Portland is an example of what not to do, saying that it's like a "carousel and on and on it goes," in reference to how the protesters get released with no charges being brought against them, a continuous cycle.

"I think what it's [the bill] saying is we are not going to let Florida go down the road that some of these other places have gone," DeSantis said.

More and more restaurants prefer credit cards over cash

Brianna Jones

Staff Writer

Since the start of the pandemic numerous restaurants have asked their customers to utilize their credit and debit cards as opposed to paying with cash.

Cash is fundamentally dirty. In the midst of COVID-19, some businesses are forgoing cash altogether. Many businesses want their customers to pay ahead of

time on an app or with a credit card when they arrive. On the off chance that money is a vector of contamination, would it be advisable for us to socially separate from it?

Health experts suggest that you wash your hands after handling money throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, but

some restaurants are trying to cut out cash entirely.

"Restaurants risk dramatic drops in sales or outright closure amid the COVID-19 pandemic, some businesses are encouraging customers to pay with credit or debit cards and payment apps like Venmo, while others are introducing

no cash policies to limit the exchange of germs during transactions," according to eater.com

Business Insider reported that as of April 14, various Chick-fil-A locations

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Some professors struggle with distance learning

Dejana Oliver

Staff Writer

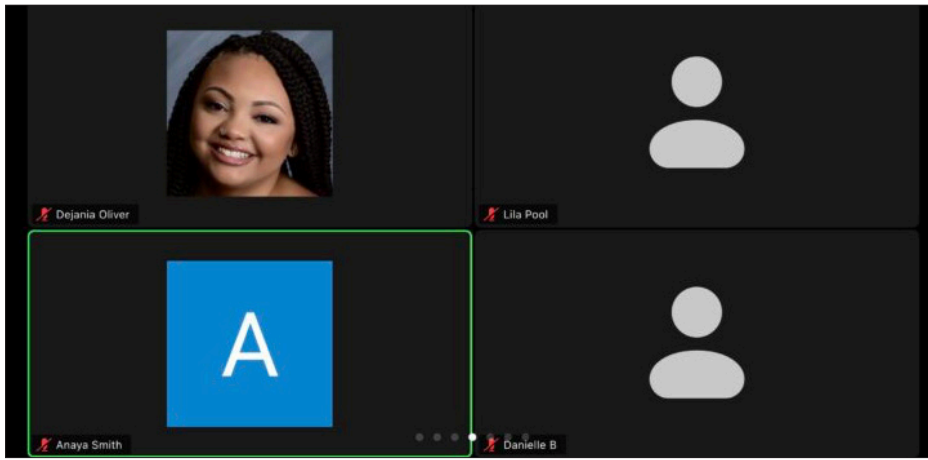


Photo by Dejana Oliver

A photo foundations class in session on Zoom.

Distance learning has been on almost everyone's mind as many schools have made the decision to teach their students online. The number of students being taught virtually is unprecedented and teachers have found that teaching students online is not easy.

Since universities started to shut down around the country in late February, professors wondered what would happen for the upcoming year. Now that schools are midway through the fall term, professors have noted the difficulties of virtual teaching. Dealing with technology issues and the ongoing pandemic, many educators have decided the stress is too much to bear.

According to a nationwide poll done by the National Education Association (NEA), 28 percent of teachers said the COVID-19 pandemic has made them more likely to retire early or leave the

profession. There is a lot of pressure on educators now. Not only do they have to navigate new technology, but they have the enormous responsibility of making sure their students still receive quality education. This is a time of change for everyone, and teachers have had to find ways to cope with that change.

For professors at Florida A&M University, the same growing pains have occurred. Professors have been using Zoom and Canvas since the beginning of this semester. They have had to deal with multiple bugs in the Zoom system and have had to get used to a whole new platform for interacting with students. While it has been an easy transition for some, other professors are still adjusting to the new form of education. Training has been given to help make the process easier, but

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Polls open 7 am to 7 pm

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Living with a medical condition during the pandemic is difficult

Delores Battle

Staff Writer

Students have already begun to feel the pressure of this semester with classes becoming more demanding and grades becoming a priority. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has added the responsibility of ensuring our own safety and the safety of others by following strict rules and regulations.

Many can agree that these are stressful times, but for Shantell Mullings it has been almost impossible.

Mullings, a biology pre-medical student, was diagnosed with a rare gastro-intestinal condition in 2014 when she was just 13 years old. Her condition is so rare that over the course of six years and countless doctors' consultations, medical professionals have not been able to name it or find a cure.

Her condition also makes her susceptible to other illnesses like the common cold, flu and now coronavirus. If Mullings were to obtain the virus, it would manifest itself in strong surges of abdominal pain that would render her weak and sickly.

"Basically, I have these episodes," Mullings said. "And it causes me to not be able to eat or have to be in the hospital for long periods of time. Even though COVID has nothing to do with the stomach, I know I would end up being in the hospital because everything [in my body] is connected."

For the first time since being diagnosed, Mullings was forced to stay in the hospital without assistance or visitation from her



Photo courtesy Mullings

Shantell Mullings is a student at FAMU.

family or friends. Due to the high numbers of coronavirus cases, patients admitted to the hospital that are not minors or disabled are not allowed to have visitors.

"There was actually this really bad experience where the nurses thought I was faking my condition," Mullings said. "So, they actually kicked me out of my hospital room for some unknown reason and left me crying outside in pain until my parents arrived."

The pandemic had left Mullings alone

in the hospital during a vulnerable time in which she was not able to fend for herself, forced to sign copious documents that her parents would normally handle and have complicated conversations with medical professionals.

"That was something I never wanted to go through again but I have had to stay in

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These two Rattlers grind and succeed

Charity Graham

Staff Writer

On FAMU's campus, student businesses are as common as J-Bird sightings — around every corner and seen all over social media. With the pandemic bestowing most people with extra time on their hands, it seems like everyone and their mother is selling something.

Jayah McCogle and Ellen Warrick, the minds behind J&E Custom Designs, are making their revenue by literally giving people anything they want. On their Instagram page, @j.e_customs_, customers can purchase various FAMU items like hats, button downs and T-shirts. In business since about December, the two sell both their own designs and fill custom orders as well.

"I come up with the basis of the idea and Ellen is usually the one that perfects it," McCogle said of her business partner. "I'm not artistic like her."

Co-owner McCogle picked up the business from her mother, who bought them their first press machine just before the end of last year. Seeing an opportunity now in her lap and already having the skills from watching her mom for years, McCogle grabbed her best friend and got to work. Thanks to their support and encouragement of each other, the two officially launched their business page on Instagram in January.

What began as custom tumblers and monogram rain boots blossomed to apparel, wall decor, and masks donning either their original designs or the customer's vision brought to life. Most recently, they released custom Croc charms, or



Photo courtesy of Jayah M.

Jayah McCogle & Ellen Warrick, Owners of J&E Custom Designs

Jibbitz. Their five different pins are designed with FAMU and HBCUs in general in mind, as well as the ever-present Black Lives Matter movement. As temperatures drop, customers can expect hoodies and crewnecks to come soon. Despite COVID-19 disrupting football season, which would have presented a spike in sales for J&E Custom Designs, the duo still finds ways to give their audience products they want.

"We just gotta find that one thing," Warrick said while describing how they constantly produce fresh and new items. "And after we find it, we gotta keep finding it."

Besides running a business growing larger by the day, the two owners are still students first and often have to lean on



Photo courtesy of their instagram page

J&E Custom Designs Croc Jibbitz

each other to get all their orders filled. This semester marks McCogle's first semester in FAMU's professional pharmacy program, keeping her locked in Zoom for half the day and with her nose in the books for the other half. Not to mention, Warrick runs her own additional business, doing hair when she's not busy doing homework as a health science major. Friends of the young entrepreneurs are amazed at the constant balancing act they must do to get everything done.

"Witnessing my friends excel in school while having a thriving upcoming business is something that I admire about them," Keyana Joseph, close friend of both McCogle and Warrick, said. "Learning how to allocate the appropriate amount of time between studying and

tending to their business is a characteristic I realize they both possess."

If you are a student pursuing your own business venture, go for it. About 37% of adults have a side hustle, according to a study done by Bankrate. Though you may face adversity when first starting out, keep at it. Warrick warns to not expect support right off the bat, however. She and McCogle learned this lesson first-hand as they got their brand off the ground.

"Don't expect your closest friends to support you," McCogle said. "Keep grinding and the support is going to come."

Breonna Taylor's case a slap in the face to Black women

Delores Battle

Staff Writer

Still reeling from the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, Black people in this country have not had enough time to heal. The fight for Black lives is still burning. People are still marching. We are still hoping for change.

But the recent outcome of Breonna Taylor's case is a setback to all the Black Lives Matter movement has fought for. It is a slap in the face to Black women in this nation.

None of the officers involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor had been arrested or charged until Sept. 23 during a grand jury trial. According to NPR, only Brett Hankison — one of the three officers involved in the shooting — was “charged with three counts of wanton endangerment over shooting into neighboring apartments.” The other two officers, Jonathan Mattingly and Myles Cosgrove, will not be indicted. None of the charges involved the bullets that killed Breonna Taylor.

As I heard the news of the court decision and the subsequent public outrage and rioting, I realized how this is not the first time the judicial system has failed Black women. This is not the first time that society has failed to protect women of color.

How do you explain to a young Black girl that the bullets in a neighbor's apartment were more important than the bullets that took an innocent woman's life? How do you explain that Black women's lives have been so undervalued that three officers can get away with murdering a Black woman and stealing her future?

The answer is you can't.

Breonna Taylor's story is an example of history repeating itself. No one has been more oppressed than the Black woman. We have been subjected to

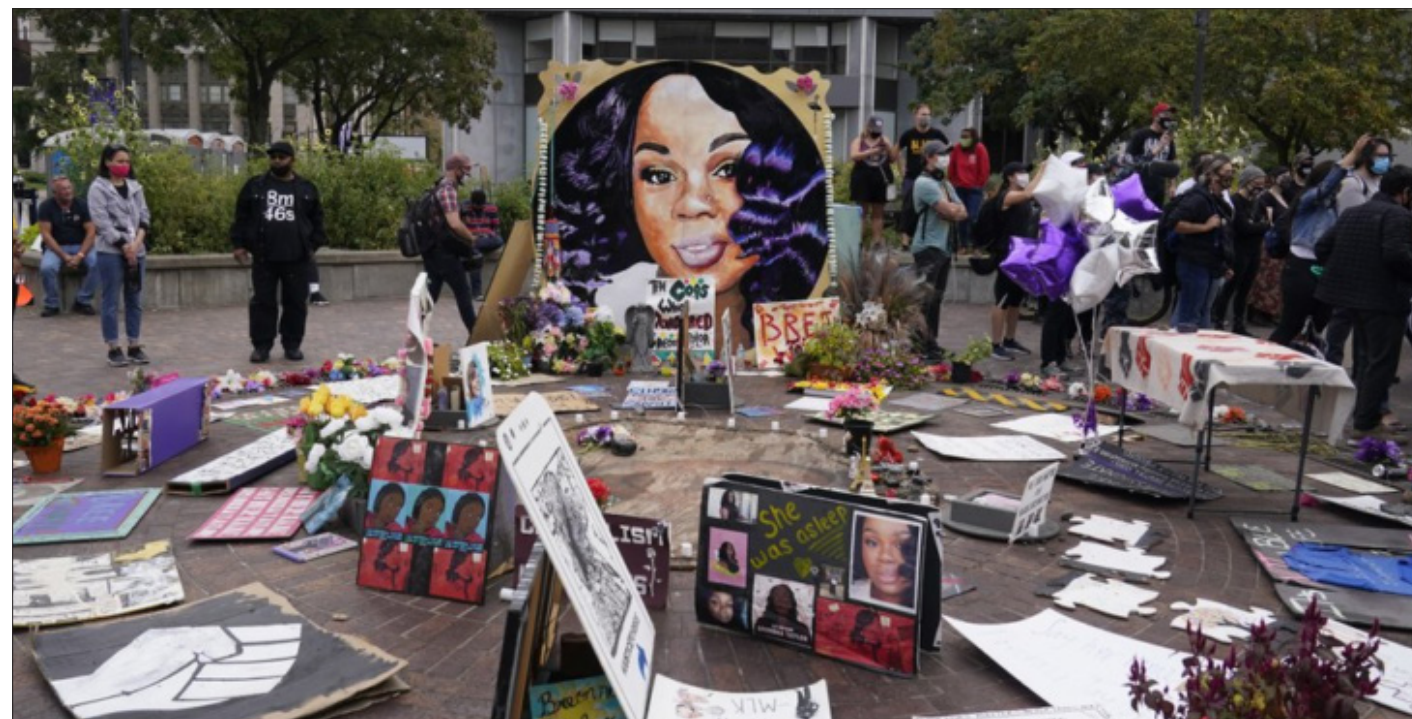


Photo courtesy Associated Press

Protesters mourn the decision over the Breonna Taylor's case.

harassment and sexual exploitation by white masters. We have had to toil fields from sun-up to sundown. We have had to endure the pain of losing a child. We have shouted alongside men fighting for the same rights. We have had to work endlessly to compete against men and still receive less pay. Our cries have rung out at every protest. Our tears have been shed for brothers and sisters we have lost in this fight. Lives have been taken and those women will not receive the justice they deserve. What more can this nation take away from us?

After hearing the news, these sentiments were shared by several young Black women. For Shardai Sallye, a political science major at FAMU, this case is heartbreaking.

“Women are already born on their knees,” Sallye said. “As a Black woman, we watch men, both Black and white, take our jobs, rape us, beat us, degrade us and hurt us. Her family was awarded millions of dollars for a wrongful death that no one was even charged for.”

Women are particularly outraged on the differences between how George Floyd's case was handled in comparison to Breonna Taylor's. According to CBS News, Derek Chauvin, the former cop who prevented Floyd from breathing, was recently charged with second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter. And yet, Taylor's murderer evaded these charges.

“This case just tells me that you won't get charged for killing us,” Sallye said.

“We are less than human.”

Sallye is passionate about this case because she feels the pain of being a Black woman in this nation but also the responsibility to change the system, thus her decision to study law and become a judge.

Black women will never receive equality and the same treatment until society realizes our worth. We have to take a stand for ourselves and teach the world the value of a Black woman. We do not have the luxury of waiting on the man to defend us. So today, we mourn Breonna Taylor; but tomorrow, we continue the fight, 10 times stronger. Once Black women rise, we all rise.

It's clear why Trump can't denounce white supremacy

Sierra Lyons

Opinions Editor

The first presidential debate of the 2020 election season was an embarrassment to watch as President Trump and Vice President Biden talked over each other and moderator, Chris Wallace for an hour and a half. The train wreck that was too hard to walk away from took an even worse turn when Trump refused to denounce white supremacy. The biggest domestic terrorism threat to our nation was once again co-signed by our President and his supporters are just letting it slide.

“You are the worst President America has ever had,” Biden said to Trump. And although there's a lot I disagree with Biden on, as Trump told white supremacist group “Proud Boys” to “stand back and standby”, I have to agree with Biden. A President that can't denounce blatant racism and violence while claiming to be the president who has done the most for Black people aside from Abraham Lincoln is no friend of mine. His verbiage and tone is clearly against Black and brown individuals.

After calling literal klan members “fine people”, I honestly shouldn't be shocked that he couldn't stand on the debate stage with integrity and denounce white supremacy. More so, my shock and anger is with individuals who continue to support him when he has made it clear he has no intentions of using his power to eradicate such a social evil. After a traumatic summer of hearing “I see you, I hear you and I stand with you,” in response to violence that is a direct result of white supremacy, I wonder if that phrase holds any weight for individuals who are voting for him and supporting his policies that don't see, hear or stand with racial minorities in America.

Trump's “Platinum Plan” that he



Photo courtesy The Guardian

The first presidential debate was an embarrassment.

unveiled just before the debate is a sad attempt to gain the Black vote that he is lacking. The plan's promise to create millions of jobs and to make lynching a federal hate crime and to prosecute KKK members sounds too good to be true. Why should we have any confidence that he and the Senate will implement these policies when he can't even stand on stage and say white supremacy is bad? I'm personally tired of our Blackness being tokenized for political gain.

On top of Trump's refusal to condemn white supremacy, he referred to the intellectual movement, critical race theory, as racist.

“We were paying people hundreds of thousands of dollars to teach very bad ideas and frankly, very sick ideas,” Trump said. “And really, they were teaching people to hate our country, and I'm not going to allow that to happen.”

But really he should be wondering why a movement that uses actual American history to illustrate modern systemic issues unveils so much racism and hatred woven into the foundation of our nation. To label an attempt to eradicate racism as racist is completely asinine.

The issue of racism all around was poorly handled by both candidates. While Biden has skeletons in his closet on the

1994 crime bill that completely reframed our criminal justice system and his false involvement with Apartheid in South Africa, he at the bare minimum could say he is against white supremacy. But why should Black Americans have to settle for bare minimum? Why can't we live in a nation under leadership where we have complete confidence that they are working as hard as we are to eradicate racism and make white supremacists powerless?

On Nov 3, those who have been saying they stand with us the past several months, have the opportunity to put their ballot where their mouth is by not voting for Trump.

It's official: No spring break

Amari Jarrell

Staff Writer



Photo courtesy dreamstime.com

A group of college students on the beach in Miami during spring break.

Florida A&M University has decided to cancel spring break for the 2020-2021 school year. This decision, announced earlier this afternoon, comes a day after Florida State University announced its new academic calendar for the spring semester which also includes the cancellation of spring break.

In a statement released by Maurice Edington, the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for FAMU, said, "As a result of the impact of the global pandemic and the need to safeguard the health and safety of students, faculty and staff, Florida A&M University has modified the academic calendar for the spring 2021 semester. Spring break has been canceled."

Edington said in the release that the spring semester will end Friday, April 23. This is a week earlier than the original plan, yet it won't impact the number of instructional days.

FAMU's decision was partly made because of the joint FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, a unique partnership between an HBCU and a PWI. It's im-

portant to both institutions to maintain similar schedules.

Gerald Williams, a fourth year psychology student, wasn't happy when he learned about the decision. "I'm a little bummed out that we're not having spring break this spring [semester]. I feel like the break is needed for college students because nobody wants to be behind that computer screen every day. It gets stressful. A break can take away some of the stress."

Many college students look forward to spring break as a way to take off some of the stress during the semester. Although the university has decided to take a week off at the end of the semester, some students feel like that won't be enough to compensate for what they face during the remainder of the academic year.

Nykia Onubogu, a second year political science student, said: "I think that was a poor choice on the school's part. I think it takes away from the free time a lot of the students look forward to. It just doesn't seem like they trust us, but it still seems like people are going to travel and do what they want."

Multiple universities across the nation are preparing to adjust their academic calendars to rule out the week of Spring Break, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and safety precautions for their students.

According to the statement, classes for the spring term will start on Jan. 6. The first three days upon return from winter break will be taught remotely, but it is unclear yet if the remainder of the spring semester will be taught remotely or in person.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR CORONA?

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cghuo _____

faeguti _____

hdehaeca _____

clihsl _____

nsaaeu _____

stwesa _____

daerhrai _____

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FAMU receives \$10 million to upgrade Bragg

Nikyya Smith

Staff Writer



Photo courtesy FAMU athletics

An aerial view of Bragg Memorial Stadium.

Florida A&M University last week received \$10 million in funding for renovations and upgrades to Bragg Memorial Stadium.

Bragg was first constructed in 1957 and since then has been home to the FAMU football team. The stadium was last renovated in 1982, nearly four decades ago.

According to a press release issued by FAMU on Thursday, the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency board, which is made up of the 12 members of the Leon County and Tallahassee City commissions, approved the \$10 million by a 9-3 vote.

FAMU Vice President and Athletic Director Kortne Gosha told The Famuan this funding was much appreciated and that it will play an integral role in making Bragg Memorial Stadium a functional facility long into

the future.

"The stadium is something we knew we needed to do for a long time and the timing was right," Gosha told The Famuan. "All of the money will go directly to renovations in Bragg Memorial Stadium. We're going to replace the seating and address a lot of the structural issues associated with the stadium. That's the first priority. Then second, we will look at a new press box, stadium lighting, concession stand and restrooms," he added.

"We want to really make sure that the facility is functional and that people who attend Bragg Memorial Stadium for any event whether it's a football game, a band competition or a community event, that it can facilitate the needs for all of our constituents

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Tillman's long-awaited comeback on pause

Elaina Williams

Staff Writer



Photo courtesy Tillman

FAMU running back Eddie Tillman III in action against Fort Valley State.

As we all know, the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference has suspended fall sports, including football. To many students at FAMU, this means they won't be able to enjoy homecoming.

But to Eddie Tillman III, this means his college football career is still on pause after his recent recovery.

"I was extremely prepared but I had to just swallow the truth that we might not even play this season," Tillman said.

Growing up in New Orleans, football was Tillman's joy. In high school along with being a member of the National Honor Society, he was the running back at McDonogh 35 Senior High School. There he had 99 carries, 10 touchdowns, and more than 1,000 yards rushing.

During his junior year Tillman got his first offer at Oregon State, then his senior year he got an offer at Prairie View. But once FAMU showed interest in recruiting him, he started to lean towards becoming a Rattler. On signing day, he committed to FAMU.

Being a red-shirted freshman, Tillman

was able to get in only four games when he first got to "the Hill." Sophomore year he had put in work all spring and summer so this was meant to be his year of redemption.

During the second game of the season against Fort Valley State, Tillman ran a play and got tackled down on his knee. He dislocated then relocated his hip causing a fracture in his acetabulum, taking him out of the game and the remainder of the season.

To his peers, Tillman took this setback like a champ. His high school coach from New Orleans, Cornell Williams, said he handled it fairly well.

"He was upset because it was a possible career-ending hip injury," Williams said. "I just told him to keep the faith and that's what he did."

During his healing process, Tillman said that FAMU did not provide him with any physical therapy. However, he had a

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Despite challenges, FAMU athletics presents balanced budget

Nikyya Smith

Staff Writer

Florida A&M University's Athletic Department delivered a balanced budget to the Board of Governors on Sept. 16, earning praise from the body that oversees the state's 12 public universities.

At that meeting held at the University of South Florida, FAMU Board of Trustees Chair Kelvin Lawson talked to the BOG about the athletic department's budget and other year-to-date projections regarding revenue and operating expenses.

A balanced budget is when revenue is equal to total expenses, therefore the budget is neither below nor above the revenue amount. The department's total budget for operating expenses is \$6.5 million, and its year-to-date projected expenses is \$6.1 million.

Lawson told The Famuan what a balanced budget means for FAMU athletics and how important it is to maintain that budget.

"It's very important for athletics to have a balanced budget given the situation that we have with the Board of Governors and that situation being under a 12-year repayment plan to our auxiliaries," Lawson said. "It's important for us to have a balanced budget for our own FAMU self, as reasons to demonstrate that we can run a department within our own means and not overspend or under project our spending."

FAMU's athletic department and its budget have taken a huge hit when its athletic conference, the MEAC, canceled fall sports — including football, the primary revenue sport for FAMU and almost all other schools — due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After eliminating football, the overall budget was reduced by 40 percent.

Even with the addition of spring foot-

ball, it will do little to help the budget, according to Lawson.

"When you have a couple of guaranteed games against a major school like UCF and then you have the Florida Classic in November, it's tough to replace games that produce that kind of revenue," Lawson said.

Lawson also discussed how the department was prepared to deliver a balanced budget this year, regardless of the effects of COVID-19 and past challenges it has had to overcome. FAMU athletics has accrued an overall deficit of more than \$8 million dating back more than a dozen years.

"We budgeted this year for a worst-case scenario. We think we've taken the biggest hit already and prepared ourselves for the worst. The worst for us was budgeting with no football, so we created a budget that had no football. So, when our conference pulled the plug on

football, we were already ready to pivot to that worst-case scenario budget," Lawson, who also chairs the BOT's Special Committee on Athletics, said.

"Some of the challenges that the department has had historically, the department has not generated enough revenue to offset the expenses that it's had," Lawson added. "It also suffered from poor budgeting. People didn't properly budget to what the true expenses were and weren't really taking aggressive steps to better manage the existing budget and control expenses."

Lawson feels that the athletic department is now headed into the right direction and will continue to provide a properly a balanced budget.

"We're just in a much better place where we're doing a much better job projecting our true revenue and expenses, and doing a better job of holding ourselves accountable to only spend what we

budgeted, and just because something looks good or feels good, we're not spending or buying it in that particular year if it's not in the budget," Lawson said.

FAMU Vice President and Athletic Director, Kortne Gosha was ecstatic to deliver a balanced budget for the second year in a row.

"We're excited, this is the second year in a row we have delivered a balance budget. We did have some turbulence prior to my arrival, and we have been able to cure that," said Gosha, who was hired in November and started at FAMU the first week in December 2019. "We're being very diligent in our financial discipline, but we will make sure that we won't compromise the student-athlete experience here at FAMU, that's our No. 1 priority."

Gosha noted that the department has initiated reductions in pay for all athletic department employees, including himself, and that a hiring freeze is in place.



Photo courtesy FAMU athletics