

Will students still be wearing masks in fall?

Nadia Wilson

Staff Writer

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis held a roundtable panel discussion Thursday concerning revoking the lockdowns and mask-wearing mandates some Florida communities have imposed.

Exactly what does that mean for college students who will potentially be returning to campus next semester? Imagine sitting in a room full of unmasked students, and an individual seated nearby begins coughing mid-lecture. Neither of you have on masks. Consequently, the entire classroom could potentially become infected with what seems to be the never-ending COVID-19.

Although it has not been confirmed, FAMU's administration has said it wants to return to in-person classes, but it is not clear what that means in terms of masks and social distancing. Students are concerned that if DeSantis does follow through with this plan, more students could be more susceptible to catching the virus.

Studies have shown that face masks are an effective method for containing the spread of the virus, along with social distancing. According to the Herald Tribune, DeSantis recently signed his executive order canceling any fines issued by local governments against individuals and businesses related to COVID-19 restrictions. He is also confident in opening schools completely regardless of CDC guidelines.



Photo courtesy of Florida A&M Facebook Page

"Florida's led the way in providing all parents the right to send their kids to school for in-person instruction," DeSantis said.

FAMU follows CDC guidelines and recommendations regarding prevention practices, so the institution will always do what is necessary to protect students. Izzy Chipman, a senior business student,

believes that the mask mandate has given students a sense of security, especially those who attend class on campus.

"Without a mask, I would be worried about my health," Chipman said. "I believe FAMU should incorporate a mask mandate to ensure the safety of students coming from all across the country," Chipman added.

Reportedly, the FAMU COVID-19 update reflected that in the last seven days, 792 students were tested, and only one student has tested positive. Masks are credited for the decline in positive student and employee cases from Aug. 1 to now.

According to Kelley Miller, a nurse practitioner at Bond Community Health Center, FAMU has to be very strategic with reopening the school for the upcoming semester. If an adequate number of students continue to wear a mask and get the vaccine, there should not be an increase in COVID-19 cases, but if there are not, then results might reflect otherwise.

"I believe mask-wearing should be mandated until we see our vaccine numbers indicating herd immunity or at least a significant improvement in the positive cases and hospitalizations," Miller said. "Considering the projected vaccine administration timeline to the community and all takers, it may not allow enough time for adequate immunity to prevent students from getting the virus."

Although students do hope to return to campus in the fall, there is still great concern from the community that people should continue to take the necessary precautions to follow the CDC guidelines, even if that means continuing to wear masks.

Democrats continue to oppose ‘anti-riot’ bill

Deiana Abdel-Gadir

Staff writer

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis unveiled his support for the new legislation that is likely to pass that focuses on harsher penalties for violent rioters and looters. The bill, HB 1 goes by competing names — “Combating Violence, Disorder and Looting and Law Enforcement Act” or, the anti-riot bill — was approved in the Florida House of Representatives with a party-line vote of 76-39.

A companion bill in the Senate — required if the measure is to advance to the governor’s desk and become law — has yet to be heard in a committee.

This bill would add new criminal offenses and increase penalties for protesters involved in violent assemblies. Its supporters say it will help protect law enforcement from retaliation.

“We have to stand unequivocally behind the people you see behind me, who put on the uniform and put themselves at risk to be able to defend our freedoms and defend our society. If you look at some of the people who have been involved in some of this violence, these are people that will come from all across the country — if there is any type of issue, they all of a sudden show up in all these places — and we’re going to figure out who’s organizing and who’s funding that and hold them accountable,” Desantis said during his press conference last week announcing his support for HB 1.

The bill was sponsored by Miami Republican Representative Juan Alfonso Fernandez-Barquin, who filed the bill in January following the various riots around the U.S. and at the nation’s Capitol on Jan. 6.

Many Democrats regard the legislation as suppression of the First Amendment,



Protesters gather in front of the Capitol while lawmakers debate “anti-riot” legislation.

Photo courtesy tallahassee.com

but Fernandez-Barquin insists that adding the word violent to the definition would make it that much harder to prosecute peaceful protestors who might become caught up in violent protests.

“In a situation like this the only way to judge someone’s intent is by their actions. And if their actions are peaceful, then they will be peaceful. And no, there would not be liability. I think it is incredibly disingenuous to refer to ‘protesters’ (and not) ‘rioters’ ... This protects peaceful protests. The first responsibility of government is to make sure our residents are safe,”

Fernandez-Barquin said.

Many Democrats believe that the bill is an ill attempt to silence the voices of the Black Lives Matter movement after the demonstrations that took place last summer. They said it would infringe racially targeted free speech.

Democratic lawmakers believe this bill could lead to an increase in arrests of Black and Brown citizens demonstrating against continued injustices.

“This misguided proposal is a direct attack on the constitutional right to peaceably assemble, and the discussion

around it seems to be setting up a false equivalency between the mostly peaceful protests of last summer and the horrific acts of January 6. This is an insult to the generations before us for whom peaceful protest was the only path to change the unequal conditions of their time. They moved us forward — let’s not allow this legislation to move us backward,” state Senator Loraine Ausley, a Democrat from Tallahassee, said on her Facebook page.

Callisto is FAMU's new sexual assault tool

Skylar Boone

Assistant Lifestyles Editor

Florida A&M University is using an app called Callisto in an effort to make the campus safer for victims of sexual assault.

Callisto's mission is to create technology that combats sexual assault, supports survivors and advances justice. Survivors will be able to report anonymously without the worries of their information being shared with the university.

"I am an advocate for survivors and what makes this exciting for me is to promote a service on campus that will heal, empower and educate individuals on a pressuring issue that should be talked about," Janelle Edge, the chief diversity officer for FAMU's Student Government Association, said.

Edge said she would see stories on Twitter and other social media and find it devastating to hear individuals' stories and feel their stories haven't been heard. She encourages students to educate



Image courtesy Callisto

themselves on sexual assault and to have conversations with their friend groups to ensure they are creating a safe space for this topic.

Bringing Callisto to FAMU was an initiative of SG'A's Department of Diversity

and Inclusion. Edge and fellow student Jaelyn Guyton worked to get in contact with Callisto to ensure it was brought to campus. Edge is also an intern with Callisto and has created events to promote the program.

"SGA wanted to bring this to campus honestly because we're tired of seeing abusers get away with no consequences at all," said Guyton. "It is past due the time to protect Black women on campus from predators and this was a way we could do it in a fast and easy way."

Callisto is in effect on campus and available for all FAMU students to use. Campus-wide students will be able to create an account and receive the help that they need and in their own time get the justice they deserve.

Survivors will have access to a downloadable record form where they can capture the details of the assault. This

form is stored on Callisto's computers for personal access in the case of Callisto wanting to file a report. Survivors can also create an encrypted match entry recording the perpetrator's information (i.e. social media, email, etc.) so that a match could be detected.

Once a match is detected, a Callisto legal options counselor will contact them with options for the next steps. Callisto's legal options counselors help survivors navigate their legal and non-legal options, free for up to 10 hours. Be sure to follow Callisto on Instagram @Callisto for more information on sexual assault.

The majority of sexual assaults are not reported. Often this is because individuals who don't report go through the emotions of fear of not being believed, retaliation by the perpetrator, or their voices simply not being heard. Callisto gives survivors [Click link to continue: https://bit.ly/3uClQda](https://bit.ly/3uClQda)

Researcher wins award for his discovery

Lauryn McDaniels

Staff writer

Florida A&M University College of Agriculture and Food Science professor Lambert H. B. Kanga has developed a strategy for the most harmful honeybee pest, the Varroa mite that threatens the honeybee population.

He received the 2021 Integrated Pest Management "Bright Idea" award from the Friends of Southern Region Integrated Pest Management's Center for Excellence as a result of his discovery.

The Southern IPM Center commended Kanga for his contributions and research on the reduction of the honeybee collapse disorder that affects pollination.

Kanga said he was surprised to learn that he won the award. He never thought about winning an award for research.

"I felt very happy to be recognized for this prestigious professional award. This



Photo courtesy FAMU Office of the provost

unique distinction is a great testimony to the high impact research and novel discoveries as related to honeybee health and management in the U.S. and around

the world. I felt that my research is providing substantial contributions to saving the honeybees and therefore \$24 billion a year industry in the United States," Kanga said.

The varroa mite feast on the wings of the honeybees which causes the bees to develop a virus that kills them. This results in fewer bees to be able to pollinate.

"Bee health is critical for the success of pollination-based agriculture in the U.S., and Dr. Kanga's unique contribution is a great testimony to the high impact of his research and novel discoveries as related to honeybee health and management, and we are elated to have such a talented faculty in our college," Robert W. Taylor, CAFS dean, said in a release.

This a groundbreaking development

that Kanga has made and is a major win for CAFS and FAMU, Taylor added.

"I think this is great for CAFS and FAMU, it is a great move for additional funding for agricultural research for the university as well to boost FAMU's image and contribution to scientific discoveries," biological systems engineering major Rae'gan Burton said.

Kanga believes that the award is a recognition that faculty at FAMU are conducting cutting-edge research that is high impact and is a valuable contribution to pest management around the world.

Kanga has more research projects planned for the future.

"I and my graduate students have research projects in several areas in the insect science discipline, ranging from

[Click link to continue: https://bit.ly/3g0Lkzs](https://bit.ly/3g0Lkzs)

Senate bill aims to improve foster care system

A-Chai'a Jackson

Staff writer

Senate Bill 80 is an attempt to reinforce effective methods that will cater to the needs of children in foster care or those who are under the supervision of the Department of Children and Families.

Since March 2, SB 80 has moved through a handful of Senate committees. If approved, it would require case record face sheets to be updated monthly and will require detailed information to keep in contact with a child's progress, which is known as a track system in legal terms. The bill is set to be effective by Oct. 1 if approved by both chambers and the governor.

It would require department officials to develop or partner with a third party to devise a reasonable plan that will allow them to use those face sheets with specific rules to determine out-of-home care tai-



Photo courtesy Michelle Brantley
Michelle Brantley celebrating FSU graduation accompanied by her five children.

lored to a child's basic needs.

Jazmine Williams, an elementary education student at FAMU, was adopted when she was a child. She says that she wishes DCF would have done a better job of placing her with her grandmother instead of her sibling's mother, who was not properly fit to be her caregiver.

"I was removed from my father due to situations that I was put through. DCF placed me with my sibling's mother knowing that I had my grandmother. Being placed with her was the worst decision they ever made. My grandma didn't know I was with her until after the fact. After moving and going through all this I ended up having to repeat a grade. My grandma soon was able to adopt me and I was around 10 years old," she said.

When uncontrollable situations arise

children who get caught between a rock and a hard place are filled with a dark cloud of confusion and trauma that affects them deeply, especially when the system splits up siblings. SB aims to change the negative trajectory for appropriate placement.

"I feel that DCF should have never allowed my sibling's mother to take me when they know I have my other family members down the road. Even though my adoption was a tedious process it was smooth because now I am old enough to understand what is going on. Honestly, it's the best feeling ever to be adopted by a family member and I felt that it was best for me however I was split up from my siblings, eight sisters, and one brother," Williams said.

Click link to continue: <https://bit.ly/3wDhNl4>

1887 Strikes raises \$350,000 ... and counting

Lauryn McDaniels

Staff writer



Photo by Vaughn Wilson

Almost 1,000 more people donated during this year's one-day drive.

Florida A&M University's second annual 1887 Strikes Day of Giving concluded Friday afternoon, one day after it began.

1887 Strikes was created last year by the FAMU University Advancement team to attract donors and alumni to raise money for FAMU.

During the first year the 1887 Strikes

Day of giving raised \$213,256. This year the goal for 1887 Strikes was to increase the number of donors to more than 1,500 and increase the total number of funds raised.

Those goals were met — and then some.

1887 Strikes raised \$349,169 with gifts from 2439 donors — almost 1,000 more donors than last year.

Shawnta Friday-Stroud, vice president of University Advancement and executive director of the FAMU Foundation, wanted this year's day of giving to reach more people.

"We recognize that we are in a pandemic, where many people have been impacted financially. The biggest thing for us is getting more people to donate, even if it is smaller amounts," Friday-Stroud said.

For 1,887 minutes, alumni and donors were encouraged to give to any college,

school or department at FAMU, including the School of Journalism and Graphic communication, FAMU Cares, University Housing to name a few.

"We have been recruiting people to serve as ambassadors and doing lots of social media posting.

We want to try to meet our alums where they are and get them excited," Friday-Stroud said.

The day of giving started off with many of the Rattler faculty, including President Larry Robinson, doing the viral TikTok dance the Junebug challenge across different parts of campus. There was also a vibe at five hosted by WANM 90.5, a drive-thru donation parade on the "Set," and a 1887 Strikes live featuring FAMU celebrities and alumni.

"The work was long, but it was good productive work. I take pride in it. Everything I do is about student success and

expanding the brand of FAMU," Carmen Cummings-Martin, alumna and associate vice president of Alumni Affairs, said.

Other alumni were doing their part and helping FAMU move forward. The president of the National Alumni Association, Gregory Clark, says their goal for this year is \$25,000.

"As alumni our job is to always support the institution. It is all about FAMU having the resources to educate the best and the brightest students attending the university," Clark said.

He noted that even though the event is over, that donations are still being accepted.

TikTok content can be a teacher's best friend

Nadia Wilson

Staff Writer

TikTok is one of the most addicting social media giants because of its engaging content. In May, discussions started circulating about implementing TikTok's "Learn feed" feature.

It would serve as an alternative for the "following" and "for you" streams, which give users a variety of videos designated for educational content. Educational content can be seen through the hashtag #LearnonTikTok, which provides tips, facts and more on various topics.

Some users find that they learn more information through TikTok than in the classroom. The underlying question is: Is the content as beneficial to users as they think?

As the semester comes to an end, TikTok influencers continue to provide users with educational content. This app is not only for entertainment purposes, but it can also be highly informative as far as providing study tips, life hacks, and more information through the hashtags provided.

Social media serves the purpose of engaging users through innovative and creative ways. Although the platform can be perceived as addicting and negative connotations often follow; a lot of users believe that TikTok serves a greater purpose than just entertainment.

One Twitter user wrote, "I learn so much on TikTok, if you think it's a kids app, stupid or just dances then you're using it completely wrong. You can curate your 'for you' post mostly based on what you engage with so if you're just seeing rubbish then it's because that's what you engage with..."

Some teachers and students have reverted to using TikTok in the classroom. Teachers have discovered that TikTok is highly beneficial when it comes to

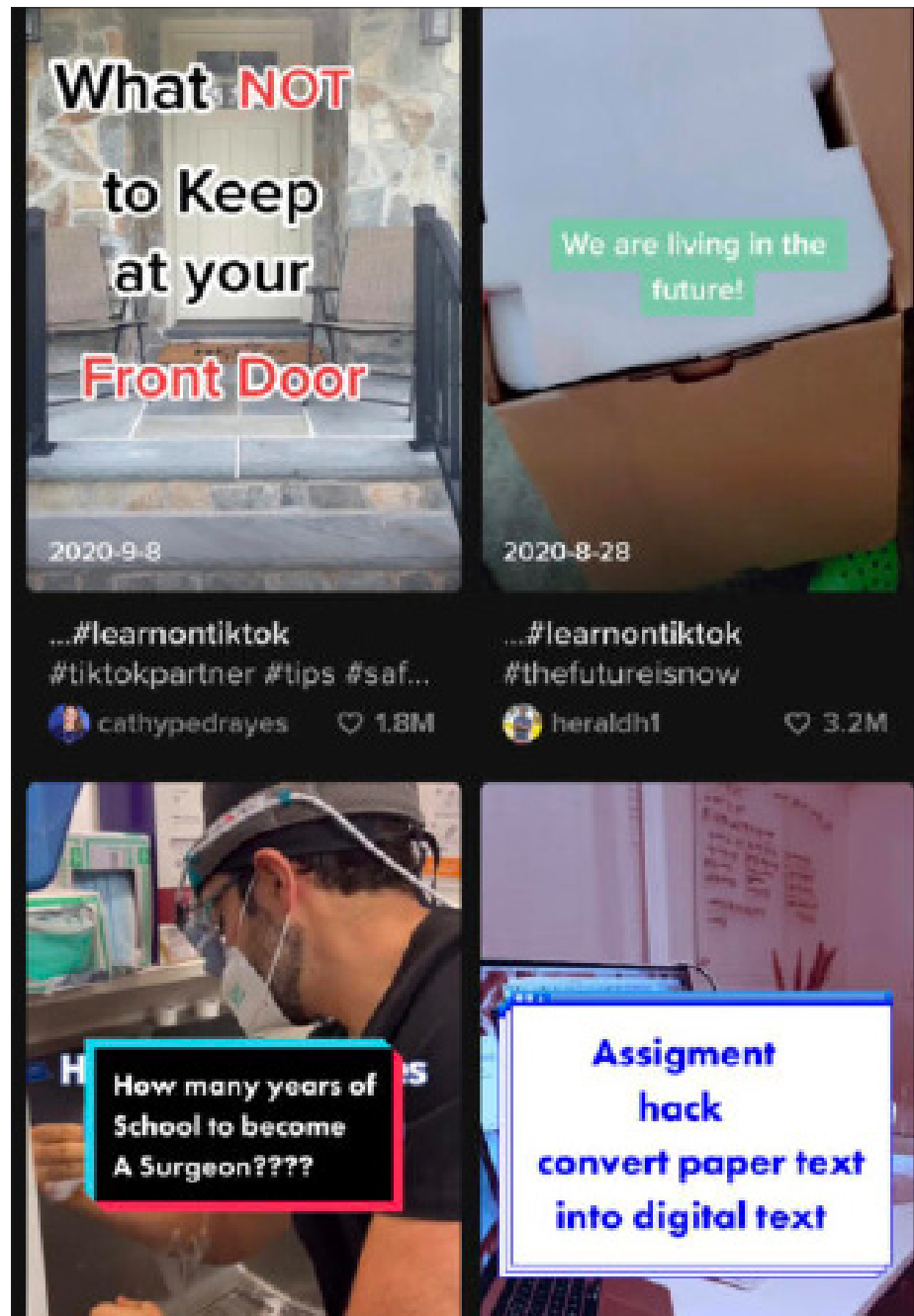
learning and internalizing information. They believe that by using platforms such as TikTok, students will retain more information than they would through traditional lectures because of how engaging it is.

According to Learning Lift Off, "Some teachers have created their own clips to explain complex concepts or share detailed assignment instructions."

Although TikTok provides engaging educational videos, some students would prefer using the platform for receiving hacks and minor educational tidbits rather than full-out instruction. According to Florida A&M political science student Jivan Nkansah, TikTok can be informative to an extent, but it is not the most credible resource for learning material.

"I have learned a lot of cool facts and forgotten history through TikTok. I have even learned a few life hacks through the app," Nkansah said. "However, my personal preference would not be to learn through TikTok because sometimes there is fake news on the app."

After surpassing multiple social media platforms, TikTok has become the top universal platform that serves multiple purposes for its audiences. As this platform continues to enter the education market, users remain unsure about the content.



TikToks hashtag #LearnonTikTok.

Photo courtesy TikTok

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Three women that should be famous

Alexys Sutton

Staff writer

Women have dedicated their lives to the modern development of the world as we know it. The discoveries they have created are the cause to celebrate holidays such as International Women's Day and Women's History Month. While being discriminated against and overlooked time and time again, women have still managed to beat the odds and discover what man could not.

While we are now recognizing great women for the "sheros" they are, many of their ideas, findings and works have still gone unacknowledged. And many women have been poached of their most notable accomplishments only for their work to be credited to a man. While in times before us this may have been common, we should use this month to celebrate

the accomplishments of the women whose works weren't originally known to be their own.

Lisa Meitner

Jewish physicist Lisa Meitner changed the face of physics by writing a letter to the scientific journal Nature describing her finding on what was originally known to be an energetic impossibility. Through her discovery she was also able to describe where past scientists had failed to find the solution. The academic journal The Conversation describes her understanding of the subject:

"The whole 'fission' process can thus be described in an essentially classical [physics] way," Meitner wrote.

Based on her work she found that while past scientists believed that filling atoms elements such as uranium with neutrons would only capture the neutrons or turn it into smaller particles such as radium. Her theory states that it was actually more like the element barium, which is a more feasible product for nuclear fusion. While her work should have made her a rising star in her field, at the time she was working in Berlin with colleague Otto Hahn.

When the Nazis arrived she was forced to leave and continue her work with Hahn in Stockholm. Though all significant findings were that of Meitner's own accord when the team was prepared to publish the finding, Hahn couldn't bear the

reputational toll he would take from including a Jewish woman in the paper so he decided to publish without her. He went on to receive a Nobel Prize for her findings. After her passing she became a hot topic in women's and gender history and also has a prize named after her at the nuclear physics department at Humboldt University. But while she was still with us she never was recognized for her tremendous impact in such a ground-breaking theory that is now known as the "Hahn Discovery."

Alice Ball

Until 1915 a diagnosis of leprosy would lead to ostracism and

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‘Pop Up’ Preschool program hosted during spring break

D'Miya Smith

Staff writer

The Popup preschool pilot program visited to St. John's AME Church on Wednesday. The pilot program was scheduled to visit Greater Bond and South City communities during Leon County Schools' spring break this week.

The program was created with the hope of bringing kids out of their homes to serve them with educational activities that include reading and art. It was put in place to empower parents and teach them basic skills that will help their children with various activities, getting them kindergarten ready. The school district

recruited Whole Child Leon, the South City Foundation, The Sharing Tree, Finacious, and The H.A.N.D Up Project as partners in the project.

Talethia Edwards is the executive director of the H.A.N.D Up Project and a member of the early childhood education and empowerment task force. She said she came up with the idea for the popup preschool.

"I had this idea as an advocate in the community that we should try and address kindergarten rates through the Popup preschool," Edwards said.

Edwards and others have partnered to bring a retrofitted school bus to neighborhoods where kids aren't ready for kindergarten. The team came up with this brilliant idea about two years ago, and planned to have this program ready to go starting last April. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, plans were put on hold until now.

Morgan Evers is another member who plays a huge role in the Popup preschool program since starting. Before joining the groups, Evers worked for the Early Learning Correlation and



has since gone on to start her own businesses. Evers believes that the Popup preschool is needed not just in these two neighborhoods, but around the world.

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This student was homeless when he got to FAMU

Ciara Brown

Staff writer

The only concerns a high school student should have are preparing for prom, grad bash, homecoming dances and, most importantly, getting ready to go off to college.

James Oyetunji wasn't so fortunate. His chief concern was homelessness, which started when the Miami native was a sophomore in high school.

Traumatic experiences at home resulted in Oyetunji becoming homeless and forced him to have to live with other family members.

When asked how he was able to overcome such adversity, his response was: "I always had high hopes along the process of trying to reach my goals. The courage was simply within me to rise above everything."

In middle school Oyetunji found himself feeling isolated from others. He read

a lot as a substitute source of engagement. In high school, he matriculated in advanced placement courses and dual enrollment classes.

Although he did well, attending Florida A&M University — let alone any university — was not something that he envisioned for himself.

Thankfully, others were able to see the potential in Oyetunji's future and gave him the push to enroll. After meeting with his guidance counselor, Oyetunji was able to join the Dorothy Henderson Scholars Program at FAMU — which currently supports 150 FAMU students. It provided him with housing, food and a laptop — amenities that Oyetunji could call his own for the first time in a very long time.

"I wanted to live a better lifestyle. And I knew that it had to be by going to college to try to get myself to that next level,"

Oyetunji said.

After the conclusion of spring and fall semesters, students always have the option to go home or to take summer classes and remain on campus until that two six-week sessions are over. After completing his summer classes, Oyetunji had nowhere to go. On holidays and breaks such as Christmas, FAMU's campus became Oyetunji's home.

While making his way through his undergrad career, the Dorothy Henderson Scholars Program along with grants and support from the community enabled Oyetunji to sustain a life that eventually allowed him to be able to earn a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He's now working on a master's in public administration, and he wants to pursue a doctorate in conflict resolution at Nova



Photo courtesy Oyetunji's Instagram
James Oyetunji will be receiving his master's degree in public administration this month.

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Children's book 'Homecoming' all about HBCUs

Kayla Johnson

Staff writer

The student experience at Historically Black Colleges and Universities is like no other. And for La-Donia Jefferies, keeping the experience alive for the next generation of students was important. Jefferies is the author of "Homecoming," an animated children's book.

Growing up, Jefferies was exposed to HBCUs starting from the age of 3. Her mother was employed full time as a professor at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and her father was a graduate of the university.

So Jefferies was very familiar with North Carolina A&T. As a toddler she attended the Early Childhood Development Lab, which was a preschool program located on NCA&T's campus while her mother worked.

Jefferies knew at an early age that she wanted to attend an HBCU. And following in her parents' footsteps Jefferies attend-

ed North Carolina A&T along with Fort Valley State University.

"There is a program called Gamsec that North Carolina A&T State University had and it was kinda a part of the UNC college system so what would happen is I would come on Saturday mornings and I would, you know, take these college classes right and really get introduced to what it was like to be on a college campus, taking English or taking math. They had us doing different science experiments in actual labs on Saturdays," Jeffries told The Famuan earlier this week.

"That was also helpful in kind of determining my decision of attending an HBCU because I just had so much exposure of being on campus and different parts of campus before I was even in high school," she added.

After having children, Jefferies was inspired to share her family's experience of

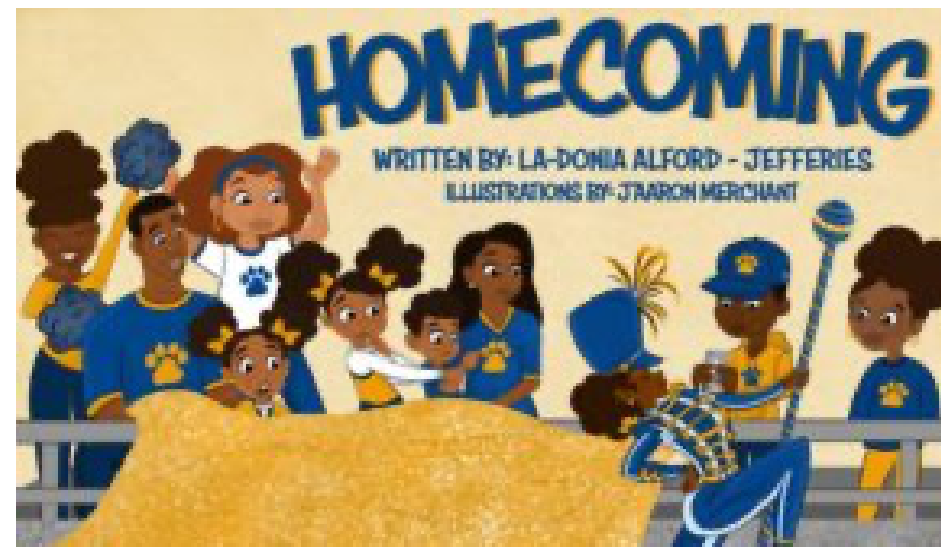


Photo courtesy of Amazon

"Homecoming" book jacket

attending HBCU homecomings by writing

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PR students at FAMU feel unprepared for the workforce

Samirra Demry

Staff Writer

As students prepare for graduation, they generally feel a sense of excitement and preparedness to enter the workforce as young adults. With the semester coming to an end in less than a month, many of Florida A&M's School of Journalism and Graphic Communication public relations majors are feeling unprepared to work full-time jobs.

Students believe the curriculum for the PR program is outdated and lacks real-world outcomes in comparison to top PR programs at other institutions. As I went through my matriculation at FAMU, there were definitely moments I felt like I was in a journalism program rather than a PR program. So much so, that I didn't feel developed enough to progress.

Shaanacee Wilson, a senior, agrees. She doesn't feel well equipped to go into a PR role right after undergrad.

"I feel like this program didn't prepare



Photo courtesy famu.edu

The School of Journalism and Graphic Communication at FAMU.

me enough for a real job and now I feel like I need grad school to get the necessities to succeed," she said.

In the PR curriculum, there are only 12 credits that account for core public

relations classes. Other schools, like USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, have 32 credits for core public relations students, in addition to 12 plus upper division PR and /or journalism

electives.

Times are changing in regard to technology and the way information is exchanged. However, the PR program has not caught up. The instruction is very textbook based when there needs to be more emphasis on real-life work that will provide you with the experience to gain internships.

Ideally, SJGC's public relations program should have more credit hours tied to the actual major. There should be electives focused on specifics like sports communication, entertainment, public interest communications and social media, considering the number of students interested in these areas.

It's great that SJGC has so many wonderful guest speakers throughout the year, yet they are almost always geared to journalism students. There are speakers

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My anxiety makes me fearful. How will I function post-pandemic?

Daniel J. Newton

Staff writer

COVID-19 vaccinations are starting to be distributed to portions of the population, universities are preparing to offer more in-person classes in upcoming semesters and some states are starting to reopen.

It appears that the pandemic that has plagued us all for more than a year is slowly coming to an end. Most people would probably be happy about this, eager to get back to normal life with more human interaction.

I, however, am somewhat frightened by the idea. Yes, I am ready for the pandemic to be resolved because the thought of possibly contracting COVID-19 has constantly worried me, but I am not quite ready to let go of the virtual world.

I hate to claim it, but I suffer from anxiety. I often become worried or nervous,



Photo courtesy everydayhealth.com

especially in new settings that involve a

lot of people. Because of my anxiety, I am

inclined to shy away from opportunities that require lots of human interaction or involve being in uncomfortable places.

COVID-19 forced everyone to move into a virtual world. This virtual world removed much of my required human interaction and allowed me to accomplish my goals in settings that were comfortable for me. Being able to handle almost everything remotely in the comfort of my own room was just what I needed to start reaching my maximum potential.

During the pandemic, I accomplished two major things that I could not muster up the confidence to do prior. I became a radio personality on WANM-FM 90.5, "The Flava Station." I had been overwhelmed by the idea of the training process in person, so I did not even

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The spring break that wasn't

Kylii Clay
Staff Writer

Spring break is an undeniable staple of college culture. It's a time to travel, explore, party and most importantly, rest. If this year has taught college students anything, it's that education does not cease for a global disaster. But must it continue to the point of exhaustion? To the point of damaged souls?

Colleges have been offering virtual courses for a full year and it has not been easy on anyone. Instructors are having difficulties connecting with students and students are having difficulties with motivation. We are all working toward a grade instead of learning. The feeling of hopelessness is amplified by the ongoing lack of interaction. At least for those who are socially distancing. Students have been grinding all year, only to be rewarded with no traditional break in March. More specifically, no spring break.

The consensus on canceling spring

break varies by the university, but a vast majority have chosen to do so. The logic behind the decision is sound: universities want to contain the ubiquitous virus and its spread. High amounts of travel occur during spring break, with Florida serving as a prominent destination for young adults from the Midwest to the Northeast.

Educators are trying to keep their students safe from situations like what took place last month in Miami, where large crowds of people gathered mask-less and stayed out far past the 8 p.m. curfew wreaking havoc. Again the logic beyond the cancellation is acceptable but the decision is more complex than realized.

With students experiencing severe burnout, they need time to rest, recalibrate and reset. However, there is a cognitive dissonance present in the student body.

Some students are choosing to partici-

pate in large parties, nightclubs and going out to restaurants while others are trying to remain safe inside their apartments and dorms.

In the university's attempt at keeping students safe, it is also unwittingly punishing students by not allowing a break. Some students use the break to catch up on sleep, visit family or catch up on work. But because the university cannot regulate how students spend their spring break, it simply took it away. Yet while cancelling spring break, FAMU will be holding an in-person graduation.

Do you want more to consider? It seems FAMU administrators are acutely aware of the toll this semester without spring break has taken on students. Now it has decided that this Thursday will be a "mental health day." Really?

The university seems to be confused in its own stance on safety. Regardless, if

students are let out a week early or not, we need a break. Period. And one day before the last day of classes doesn't cut it.



Photo courtesy Roberto Nickson

A micro-aggression moment

John Matthews
Staff writer



Photo courtesy of Bu.edu
Assistant professor at Boston University School of Social Work and assistant director

So, one of my white coworkers randomly "complimented" me today by say-

ing that I was the nicest Black person that he has ever worked with. Before I began jumping with joy, I immediately thought about a few variables: How long has he worked, where else has he worked, how many Black people were at those jobs, and was that even a damn "compliment?"

Although I felt slighted and quite frankly confused on why my coworker thought that I would be happy to hear this news, I responded with just a simple thank you.

In fact, I was afraid that if I told him how I really felt about his "friendly" remark, that I might be overreacting and labeled as that "guy."

However, as I lay here on my bed at 3 a.m. throwing balled up pieces of paper

at my ceiling until it falls short and hits me directly in the face. This 30-second interaction that I had at work continues to linger in my mind. It's almost like what I am doing right now somehow represents as a strange metaphor: I cannot escape covert racism.

This encounter reminded me of the Tallahassee Chan Center and the Social Justice and Innovation lab at the Askew School of Public Administration and Policy's latest online series "Engaging Racism: Conversations for Change." The most recent discussion was held on March 16 and led by Rob Eschmann, who is a scholar and an assistant professor at Boston University School of Social Work.

Eschmann, who delivered an engaging

presentation about the negative effects of racial micro-aggressions on college students, often referenced Derald Wing Sue's book that was published in 2010 titled, "Micro-aggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation."

According to Eschmann, Sue's top six reasons for why people do nothing when they experience micro-aggressions are: not being sure that a micro-aggression has occurred, not knowing how to respond, not being able to respond quickly enough, the tendency for targets of micro aggression is to make themselves think that a micro aggression did not actually occur, the belief that responding to racial mi-

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Too much technology might be damaging our mental health

Gabrielle Hall

Staff writer



Photo courtesy Medium.com

The spread of the coronavirus has forced many jobs and everyday activities to transition to virtual. It started as a good idea to decrease the spread of the virus but is it helping in other areas, such as our mental health?

The overconsumption of social media, zoom and virtual conferences is not only draining us from in-person social activities but it is also playing a part on how we feel about life in general. Before COVID, there were studies done to show how much surfing the web was consuming our everyday life. Social media was primarily used for everything from venting and advertising to consumer consumption. It can be a great stress reliever but also contribute to a declining mental health state.

A study published in the journal Computers and Human Behaviour found that people who report using seven or more social media platforms were more than three times as likely as people using two or fewer platforms to have high levels of anxiety.

Once you have a better sense of your

media-viewing cues, you have the opportunity to respond in a different way. You can think about the thoughts and feelings that are triggering your behavior and try to find a way to address those underlying needs. Although people often find that media exposure makes them feel angry, sad or anxious, they will also use social media to try to avoid the same sorts of feelings.

Gen Z and Millennials are constantly absorbing social media. Students all over are using Zoom to make up for in-person lectures. It can be exhausting and frustrating trying to absorb information from behind a computer screen, not to mention going into thousands of dollars of debt while taking in the world digitally.

Tera Williams, a third-year psychology major at FAMU, says she feels drained from everything being online.

"I feel very disconnected from the real world," Williams said. "Being out and around others is a part of human nature. I feel like I'm losing part of the human experience by looking at life through a computer screen."

As states start to open back up, some people are anxious, relieved or terrified to go back out and socialize. The media reports on the pandemic have had a crippling effect on how people socialize in public. Studies show that before the pandemic noted people were calling social media an "addiction."

The SAGE Handbook of Digital Technology Research says the internet contributes to detrimental mental disorders.

"Mental health specialists also warn that for many individuals, the overuse of the internet serves as a maladaptive thus

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To The Famuan,

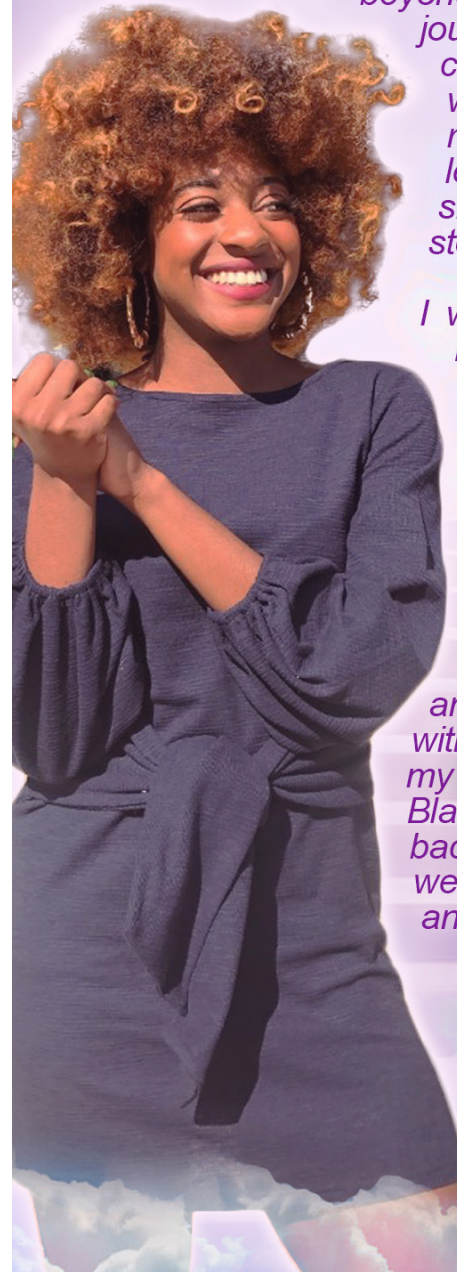
This is my last Famuan E-edition as Editor-in-Chief and as a student at Florida A&M University. This journey was not by easy, but it's always been adventurous. Writing has always been my first love and it will continue to be beyond The Famuan. I began my journey with the publication as a curious, bubbly student who wanted to live her dreams as a reporter. The Famuan not only let me live that dream, but it shaped me as a journalist, a storyteller and a human being.

I would like to thank my former EICs T'Nerra Butler and Ciara Mims for providing me with all the tools necessary to tackle a tough, but exciting role. I would also like to thank my amazing staff for sticking through all of my long meetings, foolishness, moments of joy and moments of terror. This is a team effort and I couldn't have done it without you. I'd lastly like to thank my second dad, Douglas Blackburn. He's always had my back and truly cares about my well-being as a human being first and editor-in-chief second.

I love all of you.

To the next EIC and staff, "Do nothing without intention." Be genuine, be curious and be bold. Peace!

- Ariyon Dailey



McCullum wins two awards, makes history

Ivy Gray

Staff writer

Robert McCullum, head coach of FAMU's men's basketball team, was named the 2021 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Coach of the Year. He also was named the National Association of Basketball Coaches District 15 Coach of the Year.

This marks the first time a head coach from FAMU has won the MEAC Coach of the Year award during the university's 50 years in the conference. Ironically, this is FAMU's last year in the MEAC; it will be joining the SWAC starting this fall.

McCullum has been the head coach of the FAMU men's basketball team since 2017. Before FAMU, McCullum served as an assistant coach at schools such as Oregon, UCF and Kansas State.

In one word, McCullum would describe himself as a teacher.

Before McCullum began his college



Photo courtesy FAMU athletics
Robert McCullum, FAMU men's basketball coach

coaching career, he was a teacher for six years. McCullum realized early in life that coaching would be his career.

"Coaching is my calling, I was coaching before I knew I was coaching. I've been coaching since I was 12," McCullum told The Famuan.

McCullum was in disbelief when he realized he was the first FAMU coach awarded the conference's Coach of the Year, considering the past coaches who led their teams to NCAA tournaments.

McCullum had no idea that he had been nominated for Coach of the Year. When it was announced that he had won, he was even more shocked.

"I was elated to see that Coach McCullum earned this award. He is definitely deserving of it and I couldn't think of anyone who was better fit to win," said assistant coach Isaac Brown.

Brown added that McCullum has successfully turned this program around.

"After last season, I actually had two coaches in the league say to me, 'We thought you deserved to be coach of the year. I don't think there's any greater honor or award than one from your peers,'" McCullum said.

McCullum acknowledged that without the players, staff and administration, he would not be able to win the Coach of the Year award.

"Coach McCullum is someone who I have learned a lot from about the profession. He is very talented and knowledgeable about his craft, so being able to work under him has been a great experience," Brown added.

McCullum's passion goes beyond coaching. He is committed to helping

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Athletics works to meet COVID's challenges

Gabriela Holmes

Staff Writer

Florida A&M's Department of Athletics has been abiding by the federal guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic one year ago, according to Keith McCluney, deputy director of athletics.

All spring intercollegiate sporting events were canceled last year, which affected student-athletes at FAMU as well as the university's athletic department.

Football, volleyball and indoor track, did not have a competitive season during the 2020-2021 school year.

The women's basketball season was also canceled. And the softball team had to cancel or postpone its first 11 games this spring after at least two members of the program tested positive.

The athletic department has worked closely with the university leadership and campus medical staff to operate within



Image courtesy FAMU athletics

campus and CDC guidelines since day one, McCluney said.

These guidelines were put in place to keep student-athletes and the campus community safe during the pandemic.

Due to campus protocol and CDC

guidelines being adhered to by the student-athlete population, there has been a reduction of positive cases during the past month.

"When one of my teammates tests positive the entire team has to quarantine.

We haven't had to quarantine in over two months. I see this as progress for the team," Atiana Redding a junior at FAMU and a hurdler for the track team, said.

FAMU's Athletic Department aims to ensure that the physical health of its student-athletes is protected.

"I would say that spring 2020 was the most difficult because we didn't have very much information and we were learning a lot as things were happening and changing every day," McCluney said.

The policies put in place in conjunction with the university have been effective in helping FAMU continue to operate and provide student-athletes a safe environment in which to train and compete, McCluney said.

Student-athletes at FAMU are required to take a COVID-19 test weekly, maintain proper social distancing, and wear a

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Rattlers finish spring with a flourish

Vincent Jones

Staff Writer

Florida A&M University's football team took the field in front of spectators for the first time in over a year this past Saturday. The Rattlers suited up for their intra-squad scrimmage as Bragg Memorial Stadium was open to a maximum of 500 people due to COVID-19 restrictions.

FAMU football has been on the rise since the hiring of head coach Wille Simmons in 2017. Simmons has led the Rattlers to an outstanding record of 15-7. When asked about the performance of the team, Simmons said that he was pleased with the players' effort.

"I thought the guys did a great job of competing, it felt like football," Simmons said. "I am very excited about where we are headed as a football team. There is more work to be done but we are definitely on the right track."

The FAMU football team has not seen action since the 2019 season when it finished 9-2 in regular season play and a conference record of 7-1. This led to the team being dubbed the "Black College



Photo by Vaughn Wilson

FAMU will start its first season in the SWAC this September

Football National Champions."

The key members from that memorable team such as former quarterback Ryan Stanley and former linebacker Elijah Richardson have graduated. The team is

looking for its next emotional leader and playmaker as the Rattlers head toward the 2021 season.

"The spring is all about finding who the next crop of guys are," Simmons said.

"Great programs don't rebuild, they reload. So hopefully we are reloading as we continue to work toward next season."

With that being said, the Rattlers produced explosive plays from players who are not as familiar to the ear.

Third-year running back Eddie Tillman III, who suffered a broken hip in 2019, exploded through the gap for a 45-yard touchdown that showed his promise after over a year of physical therapy and hard work.

"It felt amazing to be back out there, it felt good to show everybody what I can do," Tillman said. "I was having fun. I finally got the opportunity to show that I am back where I left off."

Redshirt freshman wide receiver Chris Sanders took the first chance he had to show his team and FAMU fans that he is more than capable of making plays.

"I have truly been waiting for this," Sanders said. "Last year I was frustrated

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Rattlers rally, keep win streak alive

Jelani Wheeler

Staff writer

Down 14-6 in the bottom of the eighth inning, the Rattlers were able to rally their way back for a striking 15-14 victory Thursday afternoon against Alabama State.

It was the FAMU baseball team's fifth straight win.

The comeback against their non-conference rival began in the fifth inning when Jared Weber and Evan Johnson reached base. Centerfielder Seyjuan Lawrence got a base hit up the middle, driving in Weber. Cirr-Nicholas Bohannon followed with a double driving in Lawrence and Johnson, making it only a six-run gap.

"Before I went to the plate I was

talking to my coach and I was thinking to myself, 'Work straight up the middle,'" said Seyjuan Lawrence, graduate student centerfielder for FAMU. "High fastball. I mean I could've hit it, but I took it. I wanted a better understanding of how hard he threw. The next pitch he threw me was an outside middle fastball and boom, I hit it the other way. Just so happened that I scored two runs and that started the rally."

During the eighth inning the Rattlers gained most of their momentum. Unable to throw strikes the ASU pitching staff went through 10 batters, bringing FAMU within five runs, Miles Watson hit a single to left field. This was followed by double

walks and Lawrence coming in clutch again with another single. Reaching the bottom of the eighth inning the Rattlers were down 14-11.

"When I came into the game the score was 12-6 and I was expecting to just do my best and compete," said Jeremiah McCollum, a junior right handed pitcher. "In all honesty it was one of the craziest things I've ever seen at a baseball game. Seeing eight walks in a row is something that you don't see often in a game. Coming back from a nine run deficit is unbelievable and historic."

The last comeback that came close to this game was in 2017 when the Rattlers came back from a 12-3 ninth inning deficit

to beat East Tennessee State 13-12. Beating ASU allowed the Rattlers to continue their win streak, which is now at five games.

FAMU swept North Carolina A&T this past weekend to remain undefeated in the MEAC. The team was expected to travel this coming weekend, although due to seven players testing positive for COVID-19 on North Carolina Central's team the series has been postponed.

The Rattlers are scheduled to play the Florida Gators on April 7.