

FAMU's enrollment declines

Maya Williams

Copy Editor

Despite the decline of enrollment with 500 less undergraduate students this year, Florida A&M University officials put a positive spin on the issue during an academic affairs committee meeting Thursday.

When discussing strategies to increase enrollment, Vice President of the Division of Student Affairs Williams Hudson said, "Our alumni are very critical in the recruitment process."

In order to combat the issue, the trustees reviewed a variety of solutions including investing more funds for scholarships for prospective students, starting the recruiting process at younger ages, and establishing summer programs.

Hudson went on to say current students have proven to be advocates of the school when talking to prospective students and reflecting on their own positive experiences of the university.

The Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and Student Success, Terry Little-Berry encourages current students to reach out to top performing high schoolers about their FAMU academic experience.

"We encourage students to talk to prospective students about FAMU and more than just the fun you are having here, but the program you are involved in and about what you have learned," Berry said.

Student Government Association President Carrington Whigham uses her social media as a tool for recruitment.

The Dallas native has increased the flow of the Dallas to Tallahassee pipeline, encouraging many individuals from her hometown to consider the university for secondary education.



Shevrin Jones, a FAMU alum, makes history as the first openly gay man elected to the Florida State Senate.

Photo courtesy of Maya Williams

"I am a product of FAMU and, being in a leadership role, you have to show [prospective students] what they could possibly be, accomplish, and what opportunities they could possibly have here," Whigham said.

Overall, first time enrollment is up 12 percent. According to the division of student affairs, around 9,000 first time students were enrolled for undergraduate programs versus this year, over 11,000 first time students are now attending.

Hudson attributed the on-going pandemic as one of the major factors in the decline of retention this year. Many out-of-state students decided to stay home and attend their local colleges and

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Student Senate takes action

Kenan Mercius

Staff Writer

Florida A&M University's student senate held a productive meeting confirming three executive branch members, passing two legislative bills, discussing important committee updates and holding an informative, yet touching presentation for suicide prevention following World Suicide Prevention Day, which took place Sept. 10.

The meeting was run by Student Senate President Artise Lewis and Student Senate Pro-Tempore Zachary Bell. The meeting started with the confirmations of the executive branch positions.

The three student nominees confirmed for executive branch positions included Christopher Allen for Secretary of

Academic Affairs, Hayley Giannuzzi for Deputy of Student Welfare, and Randall Leath Jr. for Deputy Comptroller.

Each student nominee addressed a series of questions brought forth by the student senate to assess their knowledge and comprehension of the position applied for.

The students also declared how they intended on using their executive branch positions to serve the student body and gain tangible skills for their professional endeavors after FAMU.

All three of the student nominees respectively received unanimous votes confirming their newly appointed positions within the student senate.

Following the confirmations, the Student Relations Committee presented an informative presentation on suicide awareness. The presentation included statistical facts and data involving self-harm and common mental health concerns among college students.

Following this, each senate committee gave updates on their developing plans and events.

The Campus Activities Board announced that their first event will be hosted in the middle of Oct. and there will be a Cram Jam this semester. The first CAB general body meeting is set to take place on Thursday, Sept. 23.

Student Government Association

President Carrington Whigham, along with the Executive Assistant to Chief of Staff Lawrencia Palmer, also announced several upcoming events on behalf of the executive branch.

One of these events was an Amazon session, taking place on Sept. 23. Students of all majors will be invited to meet with professionals from Amazon to learn about career opportunities, internships, and an insight into the company.

The executive branch also proposed the Rally for Tally conference on Oct. 16, which will be held at Florida State University.

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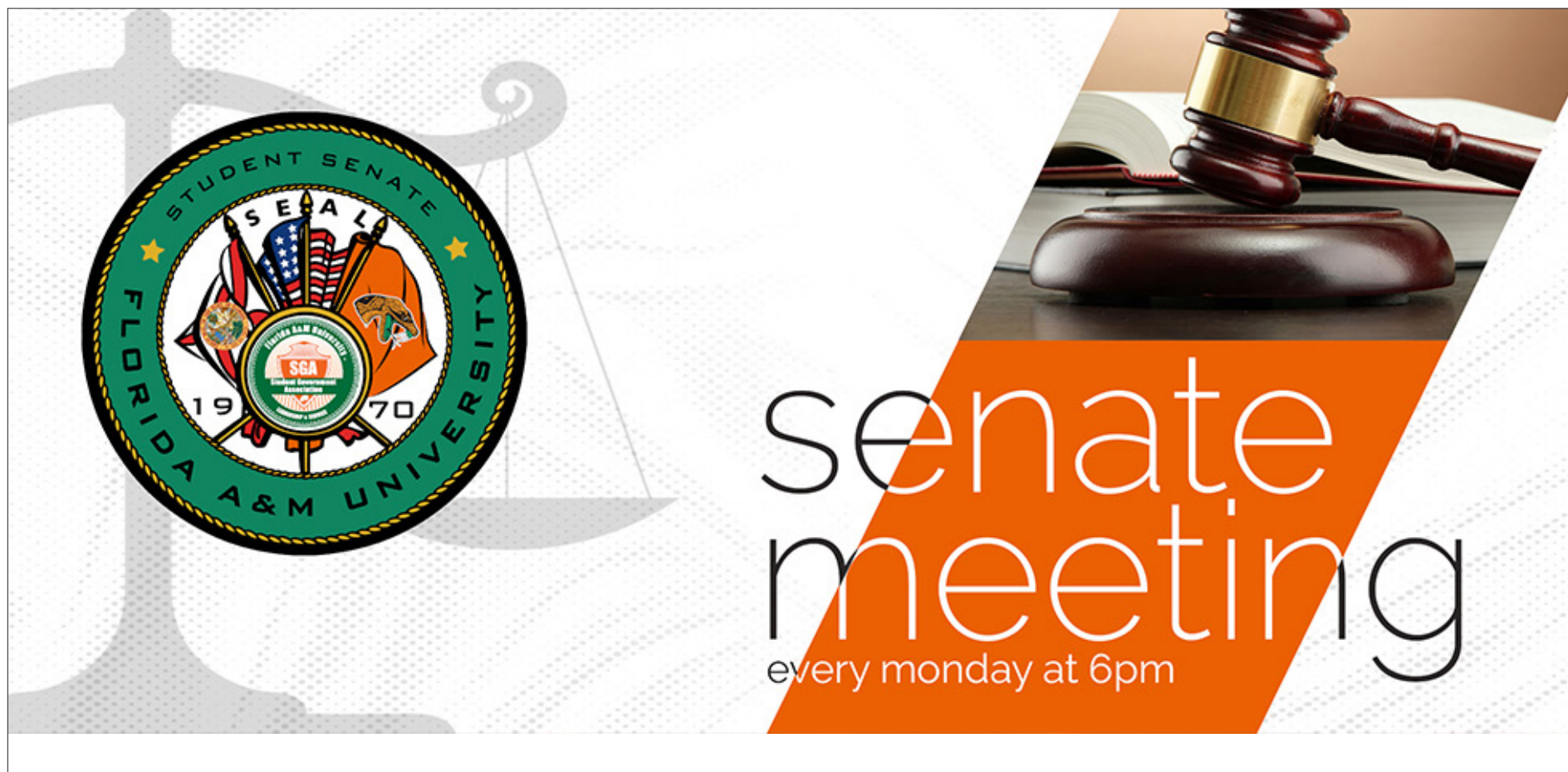


Photo courtesy: sga.famu.edu.

Senate meetings occur every Monday at 6 p.m.

Florida lawmakers vow to follow Texas

De'ja Stokes

Staff Writer

Lawmakers in Texas earlier this week approved a ban on abortions if a fetal heartbeat is detected. The new Texas law has prompted Republican leaders in Florida to announce that they will work on stricter abortion laws when they meet next year.

Their statements Thursday and Friday sparked worry among women in Florida and some of the Legislature's Democrats.

"I feel nervous, I feel scared about what could come from that and how many women's freedom and autonomy is at risk with this bill," said Lawrence Palmer, a junior at Florida A&M University.

The bill that Texas passed prohibits the procedure being performed at six weeks. It also gives residents ammunition to sue those who violate the prohibitions. Six weeks is very early in a pregnancy and most women do not know that they are pregnant until shortly after or during this time. This puts an intense amount of

pressure on a woman to make a decision in such little time.

Florida Senate President Wilton Simpson has confirmed that the Legislature will be considering an abortion bill similar to what Texas has enacted. Simpson views the Texas law as "a new approach" and is encouraged by the U.S. Supreme Court not blocking Texas' efforts.

"As an adoptive child myself, it's important to me that we do everything we can to promote adoption and prevent abortion; therefore, I think it's worthwhile to take a look at the Texas law and see if there is more we can do here in Florida," Simpson said in a release.

Simpson is adamant about more options being available than abortions. He pushes for more adoption and also supports funding for options like Hormonal Long Acting Reversible Contraception, which prevents unplanned pregnancies that lead to abortions.



Photo courtesy: Google.com.

Florida Senate President Wilton Simpson.

"I'm pro-life. I welcome pro-life legislation." Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said during a press conference Thursday. The comments by Simpson and DeSan-

tis have raised concern and questions. It introduces the idea of whether or not

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Local businesses carry on despite Delta variant

Ryan Mohorne

Senior Writer

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, several Tallahassee businesses shut down because of low demand, instruction from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and employment health concerns. Businesses across the city have been reopening for service. However, the new COVID-19 variants are making local business owners anxious about losing their customers again.

Two local businesses, Blue Tavern and Horizons Bar and Grille, both experienced a halt in business after the outburst of the infectious coronavirus disease in early 2020.

Carrie Hamby is the owner and operator of Blue Tavern, a small eatery that serves coffee, beers, soups and more.

Hamby says to keep their consumers safe at the start of the pandemic, the business could only operate at 25% capacity. However, Blue Tavern could not function at that volume.

"There's no way we could be at 25% capacity or even 50% capacity and make overhead. This room pretty much has to be full for us to make overhead. That is the rent, inventory, the utilities and our staff," said Hamby.

Blue Tavern closed their doors on March 15, 2020. Hamby bought Blue Tavern and reopened the community eatery earlier this summer.

On the opposite side of town is Horizons Bar and Grill, owned and operated by Kyle Flowers and Mike Smith. Flowers

and Smith previously owned Spear It, an American Bar and Grille located near FSU's campus. Spear It also shut down in March 2020 due to a large decline in sales.

"Our customer base was gone, who knew what was going to happen with FSU and the students going remote. It got to a point where it didn't seem prudent to reopen Spear It," said Flowers.

According to Flowers, their "bread and butter" came from the students. They opened Horizons Bar and Grille in Northeast Tallahassee for a more consistent customer base. Their new establishment is an upscale dining experience, meant to target the community that lives in Northeast Tallahassee.

While both businesses experienced a thriving reopening experience, both have seen a change in their consumers participation due to the outbreak of new COVID-19 variants.

Ben, an employee with Blue Tavern, has worked with the company since they first opened in 2016. He says they saw a good outcome when they reopened in June. However, with the new COVID-19 disruptions, customers are more cautious to come in.

"A lot of people were coming out initially. The past couple of weeks it's been crazy out there, due to the Delta variant. People are just trying to stay safe," he

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Local businesses profit from football

Tanasia Reed

Staff writer

Suspense, excitement, and school spirit aren't the only reasons citizens of Tallahassee missed having a normal football season last year. College football has a significant impact on Tallahassee's economy and local businesses. Now, businesses are back in action as the season returns.

According to Visit Tallahassee, Tallahassee broke records in 2019 as tourism brought in over a billion dollars in revenue for Leon County. In 2021, local businesses are hoping to reach this record again as in-person sporting events return and get more fans to visit the city.

Choose Tallahassee, an organization focused on promoting why professionals, retirees and students enjoy being in Tallahassee, provides residents and visitors with sources to live, work, play and learn in the city. The executive director and multi-business owner Gregg Patterson, explained that football games from both Florida A&M University and Florida State University are not just something fun, but

an essential piece of Tallahassee's culture.

"The hotels are filled up. The restaurants are full. People shop in our stores. It's huge," said Patterson. "These sporting events are one of the reasons people Choose Tallahassee."

Tallahassee fans aren't just buying a football game ticket. Fans contribute to the city's economy by supporting local businesses, attending social events and booking weekend stays as early as Thursday for Saturday afternoon games.

As alumni and college sports fans travel from all over, Airbnb hosts in Tallahassee are also benefiting from the return of home football games.

Henry Mangili, an Airbnb Superhost since July 2015, has seen the vast impact college football has had on the city firsthand.

"With football or not, my places are booked," said Mangili. "The difference caused by the home games is that those dates or weekends were booked with large



Photo courtesy: Devin P. Grimes and famuathletics.com.

Photo of 2021 FAMU vs Fort Valley State football game at Bragg Stadium.

anticipation. Every home game weekend was already booked in June and July."

The pandemic for local college retailer, Campus Greek & Embroidery Shop, pushed the store to improve its online presence even with its core focus being

the Tallahassee area. The shop offers licensed sorority and fraternity apparel and gifts, but their game day apparel for FAMU and FSU has recently become "su-

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Federal grant will help develop more scientists at FAMU

Kiara Carey

Staff writer

Ahja Harris is a fourth-year biology major at Florida A&M University who is one of a select number of students eligible in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields to receive future funding from a new five-year federal grant. The funding can provide more opportunities and resources for future STEM students.

FAMU announced recently that it had received a \$30 million, five-year federal grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in an effort to help train the next generation of scientists of color within the Center for Coastal and Marine Ecosystems (CCME).

"I feel like with this grant it would pretty much open doors that were once closed before," Harris said. "I have a

financial burden and this grant would lessen that burden and give more opportunities."

According to the official website, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a national agency whose mission statement is to understand and to spread awareness of the protection needed to preserve nature while monitoring global climate and meteorology. NOAA created the Center for Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in 2016, which is guided by Florida A&M University and President Larry Robinson, who is serving as both the principal investigator of the project and center director.

In a press release, Robinson said, "Having underrepresented minorities who are experts not only enhances diversity

but also ensures that we stay attuned to the needs of our most vulnerable populations as solutions are developed."

Other partnerships from other minority institutions include Bethune-Cookman University, California State University Monterey Bay, Jackson State University, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

The mission statement of CCME is to instruct and educate the next generation of scientists, specifically from minority communities. The agency applies to students matriculating within STEM and a social science which is pertinent to NOAA while practicing research in oceanic and coastal communities.

The NOAA CCME focuses on three sci-

entific research areas. Each has a distinct objective in reaching the goal of CCME: Coastal intelligence, coastal resilience, and place-based conservation. Each area, despite being different, has a common purpose — studying natural infrastructures while using the necessary resources to address the various effects that impact society.

FAMU's vice president of research, Charles Weatherford, said in a release that the grant is a representation of the various research that is conducted at FAMU.

"This is FAMU's largest grant," Weatherford said. "The center is a consortium of minority serving institutions and was

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Meet SJGC's new dean

Kia Cannon

Staff Writer

Florida A&M's School of Journalism & Graphic Communication hosted a meet and greet Friday with the school's new dean, Mira Lowe.

Maurice Eddington, the provost, announced on Aug. 25 that Lowe would be the new permanent dean, replacing interim dean Bettye Grable. Lowe had been an assistant dean at the University of Florida.

The meet and greet event started with opening remarks from Grable, who welcomed students, faculty and staff, who were on hand to meet Lowe.

"Today is an exciting day and a pivotal moment in SJGC," Grable said. "We are moving forward with a new and permanent dean."

Following Grable's welcome, third-year graphic design major Emmanuel Childs and third-year journalism major Pam Rentz thanked Lowe for joining SJGC and



Photo courtesy Kia Cannon

SJGC's new dean, Mira Lowe, meeting with students and faculty on Friday.

told her about the exciting things going on in each of their divisions.

Lowe said she was impressed with the program.

"We all know about the greatness of FAMU because we hear about it," Lowe said. "Now I'm able to experience the greatness myself and I am excited to be here."

Lowe said she doesn't plan on being a distant dean and looks forward to elevating the student experience.

"I see us as a school of storytellers," Lowe said. "We have a story to tell internally and externally and I look forward to showing how great we are."

The meet and greet was attended by students, faculty, and staff.

The second part of the event was

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COVID-19 changes graduation plans

Frances Stephen

Staff writer



Photo by Photo courtesy of Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

COVID-19 reroutes seniors' graduation plans.

Being a senior in college is already a tedious task on its own, but adding the COVID-19 pandemic to the equation has put a lot more on the table — maybe even more than most can handle.

It has been a year and a half since the world completely shut down due to the COVID-19 outbreak and a great number of people had to pause, change or redirect short and long-term goals until things got under control. Some college students, specifically seniors, had to revisit and reroute post-graduation plans and even graduation itself.

Not only has the pandemic affected students' graduation plans, but mental health and financial statuses as well.

Jaelyn Jackson, a fourth-year Interdisciplinary Studies student, shared her thoughts on adjusting from physical class-

es to virtual and the personal struggles she has dealt with during this transition.

"The pandemic affected me severely, I had to do a retroactive withdrawal from the semester due to mental breakdowns and depression," said Jackson. "I am a very hands-on student so learning virtually was a huge struggle for me."

Morgan Sims, a fourth-year General Health Science major, had to push back her original graduation date due to finances that were originally allocated towards her tuition but were instead used to support herself during quarantine.

"I had to support myself during the pandemic which ended up putting me in a hole and making me take a whole semester off to pay my previous school balance

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Palmetto South faces ongoing water issues

Kylah Thompson

Staff writer

Nearly a month after returning for in-person classes, students living in the Palmetto Phase III housing facility are forced to grapple with housing conditions including hot water outages and, in some cases, roaches for roommates.

Olivia Brown, a second-year residential assistant, expressed her frustration concerning these issues.

“I’ve received a lot of complaints personally about that stuff and it’s difficult because I’m not maintenance,” Brown said. “The reason some issues weren’t fixed at the time we believed they would be is because we immediately relay the estimated time that maintenance tells us to residents, but sometimes there is still a delay, so then we look unreliable.”

Brown went on to explain that these ongoing issues highlight the difference in how Phase III is prioritized in comparison to other housing facilities such as the Florida A&M University Towers and Polkinghorne Village.

“During the summer we didn’t have hot water for almost two weeks,” Brown said. “With us being one of the older facilities situated all the way in the back of campus, I do feel like Palmetto South and Phase III are put on the back burner a lot.”

Helen Williams, a first-year resident from Palm Beach, Florida, echoes Brown’s frustration with feeling neglected.

“When I first moved in there was no hot water, so I didn’t stay here,” Williams said. “It’s a continuous issue.”

As a freshman, Williams is not allowed to have a vehicle on campus and relies on the Venom shuttle for transportation, but finds

she cannot always rely on it.

“I feel like the Towers are more prioritized,” Williams said. “It seems like the venom is usually at the Towers all the time, while we only get the venom once every hour. We’re paying full price and all this stuff is going on, so I don’t think that’s fair.”

In contrast, Mulleak Pitts, a fourth-year residential assistant, feels supported by housing staff despite some of the internal issues.

“Overall we’ve had a really good move in,” Pitts said. “Everything is not perfect but we’re trying to accommodate students as best as possible. We just have let maintenance do their part.”

When asked about frustrated residents who expect to see improvement, Pitts emphasized the need for prompt communication with designated residential assistants to ensure problems receive immediate attention.

Jennifer Wilder, the Director of Student Housing, explained that while maintenance works to address housing concerns in a timely manner, there are sometimes limitations to how quickly issues can be rectified.

“We address issues as they come up,” Wilder said. “Our maintenance team works from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. so if a maintenance request is submitted after 5 p.m. and it isn’t an emergency like a fire or a flood there isn’t anything we can do that day.”

Wilder also expressed that many improvements to Palmetto Phase III often go unnoticed by students despite the fact that they benefit the overall living experience.

“I have really worked hard in the four and half years that I’ve been here to improve the

quality of our residence halls,” Wilder said. “Sometimes it’s new plumbing, which students can’t see, but it does make your situation better.”

Wilder also expressed her desire to empower residents to communicate with

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Photo courtesy: Kylah Thompson

Palmetto Phase III Residential office and community room.

What will replace Paddyfote

Allen Galindo

Staff writer

Dear old Paddyfoote, you were here, you were historic and now you're gone. The 54-year-old college dormitory named after a second lieutenant in World War I is now being demolished. The historic Paddyfote complex that holds so many memories for Florida A&M University students will now be nothing but a memory. Plans for the space where the Paddyfoote complex lies are in discussion, but what do the students of FAMU want there?

Bobbi Pattaway, an Allied Health major, had quite a few suggestions for the illustrious FAMU.

"A new tech building for one, the tech building currently is a bit dated," said Pattaway. "Also, since an old dorm was torn down, it only feels fair to replace it with a more up-to-date one or make the space more parking spaces."

Parking spaces are in high demand at FAMU from students, instructors and

administrators. The parking spaces and garages currently at FAMU are all usually completely filled by 9 a.m., adding another hurdle for students and instructors to be on time for class.

Shania Washington, an African American Studies major, stated "...parking spaces, we definitely need that."

Although students' opinions may vary, Florida A&M University has already made plans for Paddyfoote's space.

Administration is set to present a new master plan for the Board of Trustees' approval.

"Right now, the area will be used for parking until we can secure funding for new housing," said William E. Hudson, Jr., Ph.D., vice president of Student Affairs.

This news is celebratory to hear for some students, while for others it may be bittersweet.

Christian Aristilde, a Criminal Justice



Photo courtesy Alicia Devine/Tallahassee Democrat

Demolition of Paddyfoote.

major, said "Ain't nothing can replace Paddyfoote. I'll have to get back to you on that."

Paddyfoote housed generations of Rattlers and in doing so, made an imprint on

the lifestyle at FAMU. Simply saying the name of the complex garners smiles from students and alumni. Although Paddy-

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Demand up at counseling services

Iyanna Peoples

Assistant Online Editor

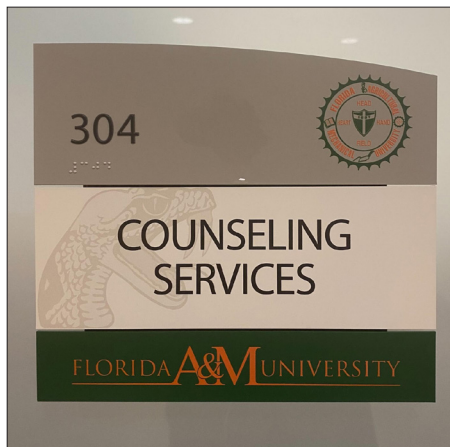


Photo courtesy: Iyanna Peoples

The Office of Counseling Services is located in the CASS building suite 304..

In-person classes or remote, as Florida A&M and many other schools opted for during the past school year? Which do you prefer?

Students' preferences can provoke intense feeling of anxiety, which can affect their motivation and performance.

Alicia Jackson is the coordinator of clinical programs and a counselor in the Office of Counseling Services at FAMU. She says virtual counseling sessions have been offered since the end of summer 2020, and that students welcomed the Zoom sessions.

"There has absolutely been an increase in students needing services this semester," Jackson said. "I do not have the data yet, to discuss exponentially, however,

the demand of intakes and scheduling has shown that students are in need [and/or] using services," she said.

Jackson says common reasons why students are experiencing anxiety since being in-person includes: academic expectations, family distress, stress in general, being social or becoming more social, and thinking about their futures.

Jackson provides coping skills for students experiencing anxiety, and she is willing to do so virtually or in-person.

"Deep breathing, muscle relaxation, exercising [going for a walk], doing something fun and enjoyable [a hobby], reaching out to someone [a friend or counselor] and positive affirmations are a few choices," Jackson said. "However,

if you would like to know more ways to cope during this time, please check out our OCS COVID-19 Coping Corner via our website. Just click COVID-19 Coping Corner in the left-hand menu section. This resource is available to all FAMU students and has a plethora of information from how to increase motivation to how to deal with stress."

Students can call the Office of Counseling Services at (850) 599-3145 or go into the office on the third floor of the CASS building to make an appointment for a virtual or in-person session.

Kaleb Thompkins is a jazz performance student at Florida State University who experienced extreme anxiety while taking

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My roommate tested positive

Robert Whitehead

Staff Writer



Photo courtesy Whitehead
Robert Whitehead in his student apartment..

With the fall semester now under way for Florida A&M, Florida State and Tallahassee Community College, student apartment complexes are not taking necessary precautions against COVID-19.

After 17 months away from campus, students returned to classes in August. Move-in day for the Players Club apartment complex was Aug. 23. With clubs, bars, and lounges opening back up for the return of students, I knew not to venture out to huge spreader events.

Township, a bar in CollegeTown, hosted a party. Many students from both schools were in attendance. It was a huge week for CollegeTown, because students were excited to be back.

During that weekend of fun, my roommate, Nick Hernandez, was exposed to COVID-19. He texted our roommate group chat informing our other roommates and me.

"I am sorry to inform you boys of the news, but I was tested for COVID-19 today after feeling ill, and I am positive," he wrote.

My immediate reaction was, Are you OK? Does this mean I am going to catch COVID-19 now?

I had been speaking to Nick in the kitchen just a day prior. Although I am vaccinated, I still wanted to be safe. After class on Monday, I immediately went to our apartment complex management office, voicing my concerns.

I wanted to know if any protocols were in place for instances such as this one, being that we had taken an entire year off from in-person classes because of COVID-19.

"Tenants who were exposed to COVID-19 do not even have to tell you that they have the virus," the Players Club property manager told me. "We do not

have anything in place for students who have tested positive. However, we will send out an email encouraging everyone to be considerate of their roommates."

Searching further for more information, I visited the home page for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC.gov, and read that "becoming vaccinated is the leading public health prevention strategy to end COVID-19."

It was clear to me that the best option for me to prevent the spread was to stay in my room, wipe down everything I touched, wear a mask in common areas, and Lysol my space. It was frustrating to know that Florida is not prepared for such instances, but not very surprising because of the governor not mandating masks.

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The fast-changing sneaker market

Darryl Lewis

Staff writer



Photo by Darryl Lewis
A pair of never worn Air Jordan 12 Retro "Twist."

cally over the past few years.

First, it has gotten harder for people to get their hands on the shoes they want. If you go into a Foot Locker or any other shoe store, you often cannot buy the shoes want.

Second, there was an increase in sneaker reselling during the pandemic, increasing the demand for sneakers. Finally, stores often do not have the size you are looking for.

"Depending on the shoe, nine times out of 10, we don't have their size," said Finish Line store manager Tashon Fleinor.

People were mainly reselling more exclusive shoes like Yezzy's and Jordans when reselling started. Recently, less pop-

ular shoes like SB Dunks and Air Force Ones are appearing on the resale market. It is relatively difficult to get a pair of Jordans for retail price. When paying resale, you can spend anywhere from \$260 to \$400 for a pair of Jordans.

"I remember when people didn't even wear Dunk. Now you cannot even buy them in stores; they just came into style out of nowhere." Chris Barnes, a student at FAMU, said.

To try and stop people from buying multiple pairs of shoes, some stores started a one shoe per customer rule and introduced a raffle system to choose who gets the shoe. People found ways to win these raffles by having multiple accounts or just by going up to the store and be-

coming friends with the employees, and they will get you a pair.

"For regular people, it's harder to get shoes because Jordan is only making so many shoes, and a lot of the shoe stores back door their sneakers to resellers, and I'm not one of them," said Andrew Lewis IV, owner of Tallahassee-based Sneaker Renegade Trusted Shoe Reseller.

Buying sneakers has gotten tougher because sneakers are in such high demand and shoe companies are making limited numbers of shoes. Getting a shoe for the retail price is nice, but you will rarely win a raffle. Buying shoes from a reseller can sometimes take the hassles out of getting shoes.

If the shoe store does not have the

Buying sneakers has changed dramati-

Events send students on Zoom

Naya Campbell
Senior Writer

Florida A&M students proved to be excited to be back on the hill during the first week of school, and Welcome Week events were a success as students showed their Rattler pride.

FAMU has provided a multitude of resources, and taken the proper precautionary measures in order to make the return to campus as safe as possible. Even though resources are provided at the university, it does not dismiss the fact that students have a life outside of the classroom.

Some of the most anticipated events occur during FAMU’s homecoming season. Rayna Wallace, a pharmacy student at FAMU, suspects that classes will be back on Zoom after homecoming week surrounding certain circumstances.



Photo courtesy Naya Campbell
Florida A&M University student uses the computers on campus to join her one class on zoom.

“I am pretty sure people are not going to be social distancing at the club if they aren’t even doing it on campus,” Wallace said. “But I don’t blame them, homecoming is meant to be fun. I just hope those who are vaccinated consider still wearing their mask and for those who aren’t especially should wear one.”

After it was announced that Set Friday, the university’s traditional social event, was sadly coming to an end for the fall semester, rumors quickly spread throughout the campus that homecoming was possibly going to be canceled as well. The Student Government Association (SGA) addressed the suspicions by assuring students that the festivities will still go on

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We need updated COVID data

Eryn Thompson
Staff writer



Photo courtesy: Thompson
Columnist Eryn Thompson

With classes back on campus, students back in dorms, and an upcoming football season, it seems as if Florida A&M is back to normal.
The health and safety of students

and faculty has been the priority of the university since the reopening plan was announced. Masks are still recommended on campus for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.
But are precautions being taken seriously by students and faculty?
COVID tests are suggested every two weeks. But are students and faculty adhering to these guidelines? Who is making sure students are getting tested? Are the test results accurate and truthful?
Pharmacy student Samara Blount has reservations about campus being open amid the spike in COVID cases. Blount, a professional/graduate student, takes precautions by getting tested every two weeks and wears a mask in class. However, she has concerns.
“The university will be hesitant to inform students about positive COVID

cases,” she said.
Blount, who is at P3 in pharmacy school, said: “Pharmacy school legally can’t require it but they highly recommend wearing masks and practicing social distancing. We all wear masks and social distance in the classrooms.”
Following guidelines is what keeps students safe but following guidelines can only go so far. The university can not control what students do away from the classroom.
FAMU posts weekly results of testing and positive case counts displayed on its website. However, the current statistics displayed are from a time frame of Aug. 1-30, 2020.
Students are recommended to get tested every two weeks but what’s the point of that if statistics fail to be updated? How can students know if they are safe on cam-

pus if no one is informing them of positive COVID cases?
According to The New York Times, with dorms being filled to capacity across the country, hotspots for COVID cases are expected.
Second year student Destiny Wright said she does not have any fears of safety on campus, despite campus being fully open.
Wright, a graphic design student, is also a resident on campus. She says that living on campus is “pretty much the same as last year” and “not much has changed.”
It is great that Wright feels comfortable on campus without knowledge of COVID cases around her, but other students don’t feel the same.
For those students, who are they to
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FAMU viral moments not funny

Briasia Russ

Senior writer



Photo courtesy: Russ

Briasia Russ

Many students could agree that these past few weeks back on the Hill have had some hectic moments. From a fist fight on campus to inappropriate events occurring on Zoom, Florida A&M University is seeing it all.

These moments are embarrassing to the University and go against the university's mission statement: "To continually improve and sustain the university's ability to attract, develop and retain excellent and diverse talent in a compliant and inclusive environment."

If students are fighting on campus and having sex on Zoom and it reaches the internet, it will become difficult to attract new students to the university and fulfill this mission.

Fights and sex on zoom can reach the internet and go viral. Once a video is viral, it can reach anyone including potential students, their parents as well as other

universities or colleges.

During the first week of classes, students were able to get a taste of our infamous set Friday with a side of crabs from a crab boil. While organizations began to stroll at this event, a fight broke out between two males. A video was made and posted to Instagram, and, shortly after, students began to make memes out of the video.

In a different week, a student was seen having sex on a Zoom call during class. Students recorded it and posted it to their stories.

FAMU was a trending topic on Twitter among students for both of these unfortunate moments.

Unlikely moments, like these, that occur at FAMU are usually said to be unforgettable. Students tend to say

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This OR That

FALL EDITION

Pumpkin Patch

Corn Maze

Thanksgiving

Halloween

Apple Cider

Pumpkin Spice

Scary Movie

Trick-or-Treating

Pumpkin Pie

Apple Pie

Caramel Apple

S'mores

Crisp Mornings

Chilly Nights



FAMU wins home opener

Daunte Williams

Staff writer



Photo by

TORI LYNN SCHNEIDER/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Florida A&M University takes the field against Fort Valley State University.

After an upsetting loss in last weekend's Orange Blossom Classic game, Florida A&M Football team returned home to Bragg Memorial Stadium with a dominating 34-7 victory over Fort Valley State University.

With no football being played at Bragg Memorial Stadium in over 665 days due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the FAMU football team gave its Rattler fans something to look forward to. The win over FVSU is FAMU's seventh consecutive win at Bragg Stadium.

Head coach Willie Simmons shared the importance of the teams return to home and how it feels to give the Rattler fans something exciting to be a part of.

"Feels great to sing the schools alma mater, feels great to go up in the stands and leading the Marching 100, which has become a tradition after a win, just a great

atmosphere," Simmons said.

"Fans showed back up after a 30-minute lightning delay, which shows how excited they are about football, and as a team we want to give them something to be excited about," he said.

The Rattlers' offense seemed to have similar struggles from last week's game, as freshman quarterback Junior Muratovic started the game with 2 interceptions on the team's two opening drives. Although Muratovic struggled in the first half, he ended the game with a 14-22 completion rate, 127 yards and one touchdown.

"He is a very young guy, this is only his second college game, with very limited duty," said Simmons. "He is going to be a phenomenal football player and we're

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FAMU comes up short in season opener

Vincent Jones Jr

Sports Editor

On Sunday, the Florida A&M University Rattlers took on the Jackson State Tigers at Hard Rock Stadium for the 36th annual Orange Blossom Classic.

After a 43-year absence, the two teams returned to South Florida for a highly anticipated matchup that featured new talent on both sides as well as the appearance of second-year head coach Deion Sanders and his son, freshman quarterback Shadeur Sanders.

"It is the epic return, all things we know to be in our culture start with our football season," said FAMU Athletic Director Kortne Gosha. "I personally think the SWAC champion is in the building tonight."

Miami native and Rattler fan Chad



Photo credits Tori Lynn Schneider / Tallahassee Democrat

Johnson also joined in on the fun at the Hard Rock sporting orange and green, backing Florida A&M and HBCUs entirely as he has done consistently for most of his life.

"This is one of the few times I have been able to see the Rattlers in God knows how long. I have not missed a classic since 1984," said Johnson. "What is happening for HBCUs is phenomenal. It doesn't matter where you go to school, it matters what you do between the lines."

After a combined 800 days, Jackson State and FAMU faithful graced the Hard Rock Stadium for what was expected to be a high scoring explosive game filled with

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FAMU falls to USF, slips to 1-2

Chloe Dinard

Staff Writer

TAMPA —FAMU returned to Raymond James Stadium for the fourth time since the Rattlers' first matchup with University of South Florida in 2005.

Saturday's result was the same as in the first three games — a loss — but the 31-17 outcome was FAMU's closest game yet with USF.

After a successful win against Fort Valley State University last week, the Rattlers fell short in their attempt to keep the momentum going.

"Today I felt that these guys played with a lot of heart — a lot of fight," Coach Willie Simmons said. "They didn't quit. We just didn't play well enough to win. That falls on my shoulders as the head football coach and the rest of the staff, making sure these guys are mentally pre-

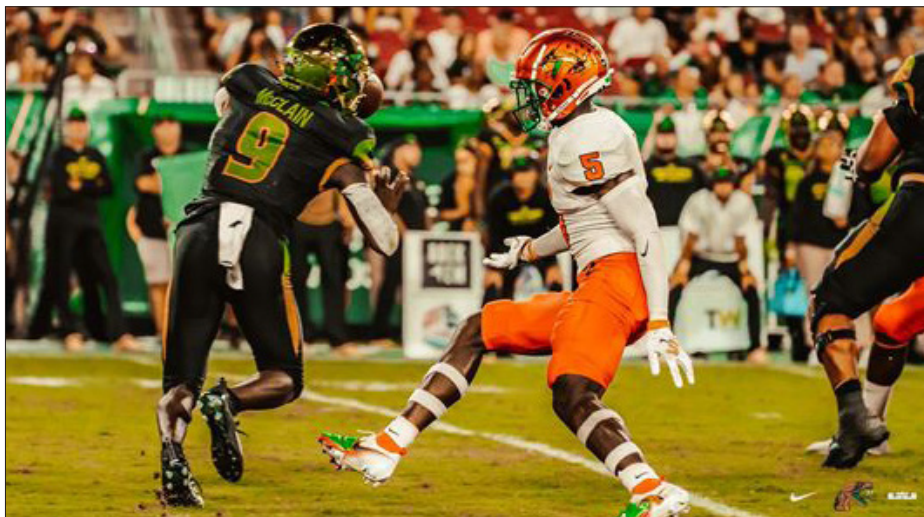


Photo courtesy FAMU Athletics

FAMU Safety Markquese Bell (5) attempts to stop a run by USF QB Timmy McClain (9).

pared to take on a team of this caliber."

Simmons said the Rattlers, now 1-2, have yet to play their best. He plans to get back to the drawing board.

"The bye week comes at a really great time. [It] gives us a chance to study ourselves as coaches and make sure that we are playing the right schemes, [and] playing the right guys," Simmons said.

The defense had a promising start as safety Markquese Bell caused a fumble inside then 10-yard line during USF's opening drive. That led to a FAMU field goal and a 3-0 lead.

But it didn't last long. The Bulls made a touchdown near the end of the quarter making the score 10-3.

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Volleyball team a melting pot

Shakiria Hopkins

Assistant Sports Editor



Photo courtesy: FAMU Athletics Facebook
Dominique Washington rising up for the kill.

Sports have the power to create social change— and they've done so throughout time.

As a microcosm of human interactions, sports challenges us to interact with others. And often, those we encounter are quite different in many respects. Diversity in sports involves not only players having different sets of skills but also players having different in beliefs, opinions and experiences.

Florida A&M University's volleyball team is just that.

The Rattlers' volleyball team is the glue that brings international students together.

Of the 16 players listed on the 2021 active roster, three hail from beyond the United States.

They are: junior middle hitter Aybuke Kocabiyik, from Istanbul, Turkey; outside

hitter Radka Dimitrova, from Sofia, Bulgaria; and freshman setter Irem Ucar, from Izmir, Turkey.

Dominique Washington and Ucar were recently named to the College of Charleston Classic All-Tournament Team as the Rattlers went 2-1 over past weekend. Washington is currently third in the nation with 5.11 kills per set.

The diversity does not stop at the players. Head coach Gokhan Yilmaz is from Istanbul, Turkey.

"What we're doing in recruiting is trying to bring the best players here that will help the program to move forward. If they're from Puerto Rico, Bulgaria or Texas, it doesn't matter to us," Yilmaz told the Tallahassee Democrat.

"It creates that culture where everybody brings something different and makes it more fun. You're almost going

around the world without traveling. Everybody brings different parts of their culture and they get to learn the American culture as well."

The transition was not easy, but FAMU students made them feel at home. They learned what FAMU means when it says the university is a "FAMULY."

"When I came here, I was scared because my English was bad," Radka said, according to the Tallahassee Democrat. "People were so nice. I would try to explain, and people said I got you. We don't have a lot of Black people in Bulgaria. It was different here and I liked that."

Since accepting the job, Yilmaz has been trying to follow the footsteps of previous coaches by recruiting from all over the country.

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