

Tia Smith follows her dreams and doesn't let lupus control her

Jada Jean

Staff Writer

Tia Smith, a Florida A&M University senior from Miramar, Florida, was diagnosed with systemic lupus at age 14 and has been fighting since her diagnosis. While her journey has not always shined the happiest days on her, she's learned to keep a smile on her face.

Systemic lupus is an inflammatory disease that attacks the immune system. It is the most common form of lupus and can affect the joints, brain, heart and lungs, which causes acute pain and inflammation.

Attending FAMU was her biggest goal, but after graduating high school, Smith's doctors recommended that she stays close to home so that they can monitor her health. It wasn't easy, but she was determined to get her doctors to approve her wishes of furthering her education away from home.

During Smith's freshman year, she had gotten severely sick with pneumonia for over two weeks. By doctors' orders, she was forced to move back to Miramar. Smith was devastated that her education would be delayed.

"I didn't want this disease to take over my life," Smith said. "I still wanted to pursue my dreams of going to FAMU—I didn't want this disease to define me."

According to lupus.org, lupus is more common in African-American women than any other race. They develop the disease at a younger age, causing more life-threatening complications. One in 250 African-American women will develop some form of lupus.

After taking half a year off from school,

Smith's lupus was more controllable, and she was able to convince her parents and her doctors to let her continue her education as a fellow rattler.

"I was very afraid because I wanted to make sure she was keeping up with her medications, and keeping up with her appointments." Nastasha Smith, Tia's mother.

Her family worried that if she was to get extremely sick again, they wouldn't be there to help her. The city of Tallahassee has no rheumatologist, therefore if Smith needed to get to the hospital, the nearest rheumatologist is over two hours away.

Smith usually travels back to her hometown on the weekends for all of her doctor appointments, but due to the pandemic, she has been able to complete most of her appointments via Zoom.

Everyday isn't so happy for her. Some days she's joyful, and other days she can't make it out of bed. But her story is her testimony, and everyday she is thankful for life itself.

"You have to be strong and know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel," said Smith.

Her current health status is well, and she is doing great academically. Smith is resilient and dedicated to not allowing her illness defeat her. As her journey continues, she is ready to overcome any obstacles and tribulations that may come her way.

For more information about lupus or how you can help spread awareness, visit lupus.org.



Tia Smith's sophomore year of college.

Photo courtesy Tia Smith

Stone, a FAMU grad, joins BOT

Chamarya Roberts

Staff Writer

Kenward “Kenny” Stone, a Florida A&M University alum, has been appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis to a seat on the university’s Board of Trustees.

“I am so proud to join the Board of Trustees and give back to an institution that provided such a transformative experience. Florida A&M provided a firm foundation for future growth across all aspects of my life — faith, family, business and community,” Stone said in a release.

Stone received his bachelor’s in business administration from the School of Business and Industry in 2009. He continued his education, receiving his MBA at the Harvard Business School.

Stone started a private investment fund, SL Group Investors, in 2017; where he serves as co-founder and managing partner. In 2019, he became the CEO of Broughton Pharmaceuticals.

“FAMU’s business program (SBI) and the relationships they had then and now

is what ultimately drew me there,” Stone said.

He said he always knew that he wanted to give back to FAMU in any way he could, but he never thought it would be on the Board of Trustees. He expected to contribute financially or by being a mentor to a few students.

“On behalf of the university community, I welcome Kenward Stone to our Board of Trustees and thank Gov. DeSantis for selecting this outstanding FAMU alumnus to serve his alma mater in this new capacity,” FAMU President Larry Robinson told the Tallahassee Democrat.

As a member of the Board of Trustees, Stone said, “The goal is to make a better FAMU and share my experience as a student. But share my experience leading and driving organizations to make it more streamlined and more sustainable for the future.”

He said a top priority is making sure

the curriculum is up to date. He wants to make sure that students are prepared to provide for themselves and add value to society.

He also wants to focus on students who take out loans and parents who are paying out of pocket by making sure the students have the best opportunities to finish and graduate.

Kaylyn Stone, his wife and also a FAMU alumna, said, “He is definitely the one to get the job done, by any means necessary in the best way possible. He is going to figure out all the obstacles and really take the time to conquer them. He can have long nights or short nights, but he is defiantly going to work to all the facts to make sure that the job he’s doing is a solid one.”

His appointment is subject to confirmation by the Florida Senate.



Photo courtesy Tallahassee Democrat
Kenward “Kenny” Stone has been appointed to FAMU’s Board of Trustees.

Voters approve Children’s Services Council

Diamond Robinson

Staff writer



Photo by Diamond Robinson

The Children’s Services Council had a strong advocacy group.

One of the big local winners in last week’s election was the Children’s Services Council. With surprisingly strong support, the citizens of Leon County have given the green light to create a governmental entity.

Our Kids First is an organization that was started a couple of years ago to advocate for the foundation of the county’s Children’s Services Council. Our Kid’s First raised money to run television ads, deliver mailers and promote a campaign.

“A lot of people in the community contributed to the cause. We’re thrilled that so many stepped up, provided financial contributions, volunteered, advocated for it and lent out their good name to the effort. We were grateful to have people

working really hard to achieve this victory,” said Kids First president Jon Moyle.

The CSC identified three areas of focus: success in school and life, healthy children and families, as well as stable and nurturing families and communities.

Projects that will be funded by the CSC will be determined based on the essential needs of individuals at that time.

“It makes me very happy to know that our hard work has paid off. I was born here in Tallahassee so I know how much this community and the kids can grow from having support like this,” said Kids First staff member Steve Beasley.

A diverse group of 10 citizens will be leading the CSC. At least four elected officials will serve on the Children’s Ser-

vices Council: the superintendent of Leon County Schools, a county commissioner, a school board member and a circuit judge who handles first-hand dependency and delinquency cases involving children.

Circuit Judge, John Sjostrom chaired a group that produced a 116-page report identifying several matters they recommended the council target.

“One of the examples I can offer is to ensure that kids who enter kindergarten are prepared to learn. Right now, about half of the kids entering kindergarten aren’t ready to learn and that just isn’t a good way to start an education. Education is so important and this group recognizes

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City OKs crisis intervention pilot program

Akilah Winters

Staff Writer

Tallahassee city commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to allow a pilot program of the behavioral health crisis intervention response unit, which plans to partner with the Apalachee Center.

During the meeting Mayor John Dailey had to recuse himself from the chambers due to a conflict of interest he has in connection to the Apalachee Center.

The crisis response unit will consist of a licensed mental health professional, a Tallahassee Police Department officer who will be specially trained in mental health, and a Tallahassee Fire Department paramedic.

The three person team will be stationed and will execute most of their operations at the Apalachee Center on Capital Circle Northeast.

The program has already had approved funding by the city commission with a budget of \$500,000.

As a pilot program, it will begin taking non-violent calls that deal with Baker Acts

and then hopes to expand to more emergency-related calls.

Jay Reeve, the president and CEO of the Apalachee Center, explained the history of the idea of a response unit.

“A year and a half ago the Apalachee Center was contracted by the state to create a large mobile response team across the eight counties of the Big Bend area. This mobile response team provides 24/7 access to mental health crises telephonically and Leon County live. However it is a stand alone team that can access virtually anyone,” Reeve said.

Darwin Gamble used his three minutes to share his hopes for the program and went into more detail about the dangers of including a uniformed police officer.

“This may be one of the most important votes any of you will ever cast. I think we all know now that it is not appropriate to send uniform police officers armed with guns to answer every 9-1-1 call. I think we also know that the mere sight of



Photo courtesy tallahassee.com

Tallahassee City Hall.

uniformed police officers may escalate a situation into something as we seen lately in Philadelphia. I think this proposal has

the potential to save lives,” said Gamble.

Although according to the proposal, the TPD officer will be in plain clothes,

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Student senators clash over need for diversity officer

Tykeem McCray

Staff writer



Photo courtesy SGA

Florida A&M University’s Student Senate filled multiple positions during its weekly Zoom meeting Monday evening — with one notable exception.

During the confirmation for Chief Diversity Officer, the senate was divided with opposing viewpoints. Several senators criticized the position, arguing that it was unnecessary, while others felt the opposite.

Senator Bria Calvin argued that the position was pointless and felt that there were already jobs in SGA that are supposed to cover the issues that a diversity officer might be responsible for. Calvin found that holding people accountable in their jobs would be more feasible than creating another position.

“I think the position in itself is a stretch, I feel like we have positions that already cover student welfare issues. We’re just not holding people accountable for doing their jobs,” Calvin said. “I understand what is trying to happen with the position, but we don’t need to just fill the branch.”

Marteis Lewis, chair of the senate’s Student Relations Committee, said the position was a step in the right direction. Lewis said that this position will be important to the student body and that is significant.

“I feel like when looking at this position, we don’t need to look at SGA and if they’re doing their job, we need to look at the student body and what they need

,” Lewis said. “This is a very important topic that needs to be handled on FAMU’s campus. There are a lot of communities on campus that feel like their voices are not heard.”

Jaelyn Guyton, the candidate for Chief Diversity Officer, explained that if other departments in SGA could handle these issues, why was it such a push for this position to be created?

“I don’t believe that there is any specific language regarding LGBT, sexual violence, sexual awareness or assault in any of the departments, if there wasn’t a need for this position then it wouldn’t have been such an outcry to have it,”

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Congressman Clyburn fields questions from FAMU students

Samoni Brown

Staff Writer

Florida A&M's College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities held an online lecture Thursday with U.S. Congressman James Clyburn to discuss social justice reform. Clyburn, from South Carolina, has been a member of Congress since 1993 and has been the third ranking Democrat in the House since 2007.

Audience member Upton Fischer asked for suggestions about how the younger generation can better engage in the Congressional Black Caucus. Clyburn touched on the need for a better understanding of the proper definitions to the issues being talked about. He compared our interstates and highways to broadband internet, or the "information highway," and he explained the importance of considering the internet as a necessity in infrastructure funding. Since the pandemic, America has seen the reality of the lack of internet access in households and how that unavailability is affecting school-age

children. Due to these shortages some children are being held back a grade or having to face extreme difficulty to access the internet.

In addition, an increase in violence against women has been noticed across the nation. Ocean Archbold inquired about the measures being taken to ensure the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Although it has already been reauthorized (2019-2024), Clyburn said, "Due to COVID-19 we may need to relook at that." He added that there may need to be some new definitions added and possible expansion. Alexis McAfee expressed concerns about sustaining SSI for 2050, and Clyburn said that the current standards are a little outdated. Illustrating when SSI was originally put in place that the retiree to employment ratio was about 1:17, and now the ratio is about 1:3. However, he believes SSI will be viable in 2050.

Early education was also a topic of discussion, with questions about solutions Head Start programs in urban and rural communities. The "10-20-30" that Joe Biden has adopted, was mentioned as a possible solution to combat persistent poverty. 10-20-30 says at least 10% of all money appropriated for Head Start must go into the communities where 20% or more of the population has been at or beneath the poverty level for the last 30 years.

2020 has literally shown us via social media and other platforms the urgent need for social reform throughout the United States. Congressman Clyburn ended his discussion by saying, "This election was an effort to restore goodness in this country."

The 2020 election has been called one of the most important elections of our lifetimes, setting records for the numbers of ballots cast.



Photo courtesy famuedu.edu
Congressman Clyburn.

The search continues for SJGC dean

Vynessah Dasher

Staff writer



Photo courtesy FAMU SJGC WordPress

School of Journalism and Graphic Communication.

A task force meeting was held on Tuesday to narrow down the list of prospective candidates to preside over the School of Journalism and Graphic Communication. Executive Assistant to the Dean, William Jiles, says he isn't limiting his vote to contenders with a background in journalism.

"The school has competent people who are in journalism, graphic design, and public relations. The focus should be whether the person can run a business or organization, rather than getting bogged down by a specific degree," said Jiles.

26 candidates were examined between 16 attendees—SJGC professors, two student ambassadors, and representatives from Greenwood/Asher and Associates—a company that specializes in placing qualified professionals into vacant leadership positions.

The Greenwood/Asher representatives kicked off the Zoom meeting with a brief reminder of the code of ethics.

"It's important that we as a committee make these decisions in a fair and unbiased way, looking at the evidence of accomplishments and skills that match what we have listed in the description," said a representative.

The committee anticipates a long road ahead in the search of a dynamic leader who can "enhance the excellence" of SJGC, according to committee chairwoman and dean over FAMU's College of Education—Allyson Watson, who is responsible for facilitating the efforts in onboarding a new dean.

"We know the SJGC faculty have

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Clarke can finally be himself

Kailyn Rhone

Online Editor

Dreaming of becoming a high-end fashion designer since childhood, Chazriq Clarke always had a passion for fashion. Despite his childhood ambitions, Clarke grew to love performing arts while attending Florida A&M University. Now, he aspires to be a world-changer through acting to powerfully influence future generations.

The 20-year-old junior is always seen at the hottest spots on FAMU's campus, either sporting his alma mater in modern fashion or gleefully smiling and talking to strangers walking by. Along with being a social butterfly, Clarke is involved in multiple campus organizations and holds several leadership positions on campus, such as the current Mister Essential Theatre and an orientation leader.

However, Clarke is more than just a familiar or well-known face on campus. He is a student activist for Black rights and LGBTQ+ rights, who also is a queer Black man. Following the recent news of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' historic win, Clarke feels he can be loud and proud about his authentic self in America.

"I have no doubt that Biden and Harris will truly make America 'Great,'" the double major — business administration and theatre performing arts — said. "With the Biden-Harris administration running things, I can live knowing that the people who run this country represent me, care about me, and make policies that help me. Both of these individuals have shown that they are willing to do what it takes to make strides forward for minorities, especially African-Americans, and the LGBTQ+ community."

On FAMU's campus, Clarke voted for the first time in the 2020 presidential election during early voting. The registered independent voter voted for Biden and Harris because he knew it was time for a change in the political system and time for minorities like him across the nation to finally be noticed and heard.

Growing up as a double minority in a ruthless country and living in a Chris-



Photo courtesy Chazriq Clarke

Chazriq Clarke, a junior at Florida A&M University.

tian household has been challenging for Clarke. Clarke and his family always knew he was part of the LGBTQ+ community, but his family didn't want to accept it. Attending Fort Lauderdale High School and College Academy, he began to finally realize he was a Black queer boy, forcing him to acknowledge and face his fears, which resulted in backlash from his peers and even his family.

"Talk about being bullied every day ever since the time you were born," Clarke said. "Talk about always being judged twice as hard everywhere you go because your skin and sexuality enter a room before you even do. Or talk about being kicked out and disowned by your family,

and the weight of feeling like a disappointment even after your 'loving' family has unwillingly decided to take you back."

He added: "These are just a few of the hardships I have had to face in my upbringing as a Black queer man with Caribbean and Christian parents. My life has had many challenging moments that tested me in ways that I never thought possible, but I made it through. But unlike me, Black queer boys such as Nigel Shelby and Jamel Myles weren't as fortunate. So every day, I fight against homophobic people and social injustices for those that can't so other Black queer boys, like me, can have faith and hope that they can still make it no matter what they have been

through."

With ambitions of becoming a renowned actor, Clarke never did anything relating to performing arts until he came to FAMU because he felt he had to please and fit everyone's "requirements" instead of owning and living in his truth.

"Anything I did that was even remotely close to 'performing arts' was deemed as feminine or 'for girls' by my family. I did play piano though, but that was as close as I could get," said Clarke. "At church was a different story, I would sing and mime/praise dance for my church and no one would say anything. But I still felt that negative feeling from my father, as he deemed even those things as 'girly,' even if it was for God. But when I came to FAMU, I really fell in love with the stage, the arts, and my creative side."

Kenya Williams — a FAMU senior theatre performance student from Tallahassee, Fl, and a "theatre mom" to Clarke — shares Clarke's endless dedication to his craft and how he brightens up a bad day simply with his smile.

"As a friend, he's the most selfless, encouraging, and vibrant person I've ever met. You could see his smile and hear his voice from miles away," said Williams.

"As a theatre student, I've witnessed his growth and dedication to FAMU Essential Theatre's department. From being a camp counselor for the Irene C. Edmonds Youth Theatre Camp to starring in FAMU Essential Theatre's production of 'Hand's Up,' he has been a testament to versatility and passion for the arts. Chaz is one of those people that stands out in every room and he makes your heart smile."

Under Biden's administration, Clarke finally feels he is heading in the right direction to openly be his true self, along with many others from his community. Even though some don't believe Biden is for the LGBTQ+ community, Biden will be the first-ever president to enter the White House supporting marriage equality

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'Holiday blues' may be a lot bluer for some this year

Charity Graham

Staff writer

Together, the pandemic and the holiday blues may pack a punch to our mental health

Despite the plethora of warmth, love and joy that typically surround the last two months of the year, these holidays can be a looming cloud for some. Feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and more this time of year are known as holiday depression. With COVID-19 forcing on-campus students to extend their stays back home, many of them are vulnerable now more than ever.

Different from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), the holiday blues is much more situational. The feelings of melancholy are directly associated with the stresses of the pending holidays themselves and is psychologically based. SAD has more to do with an individual's biology.

The top stressors from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day are lack of time and money, commercialism, family gatherings and the pressures of gift-giving, according to a survey by the American Psychological Association. Now, factor in the peaks of anxiety and depression that seem to go hand in hand with the COVID-19 pandemic. Pressures from health officials to stay home, uncertainties regarding the virus' spread, and economic hardships have only intensified since our nation's first lockdown some six months ago. As annual Thanksgiving dinners and Christmas traditions now get planned via Zoom, the isolation will wear many down, especially those already suffering from depression.

"I haven't seen most of my family that's not immediate since the beginning of the pandemic," second-year Florida A&M student



Photo courtesy Pinterest

Santa is wearing his mask this year.

Tianna Hightower said. "For me, what keeps me afloat when I'm not doing well mentally is surrounding myself with my family members and this year I won't really have that option."

As college students, we usually travel home for Thanksgiving, then return to campus for about two weeks before returning for Christmas break. This year, in efforts to keep students safe, FAMU's residence halls will close at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 25 and will not reopen until Monday, Jan. 4 at 9 a.m. Students were able to report extenuating circumstances and if approved, stay until Dec. 13. Either way, the end of this semester introduces a longer stay at home than what

everyone is used to around the holidays.

"I will have to adjust myself being home for a month and a half extensively being that I will be still taking classes and I have to be considerate of other people in the house and ensuring I'm not being a disruption," Jacksonville native Armani Jones said.

Even from their hometown, students can go to certain measures to combat negative feelings this winter. Lata McGinn, a psychology professor at Yeshiva University is well versed on the cause and remedy for these emotions. McGinn recommends keeping up with an activity that can bring a sense of

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Get to know your counselors and what they can do for you

Dynasty Williams

Staff writer

The fear of talking to someone you don't know, coupled with the buildup of emotional stress, could make the prospect of talking to a counselor scary. Especially when you are not sure if they genuinely want to help you, or just want a check. Thankfully, Marquis Stewart, 34, and Alicia Jackson, 41, two of the four counselors at FAMU's Office of Counseling Services, are much more the former and far from the latter.

Jackson, a FAMU alumna, received her bachelor's and master's degrees from FAMU, and her doctorate at the University of Georgia. Jackson inherited her need to give back and inspiration from her mother. Jackson's sheer motivation to help students who grew up like her is inspiring.

"My mother had a high school diploma and a Lively certification in office ad-

ministration. She never went to college. My mother did the best she could by me, considering her own knowledge base. But, I did not have much guidance or a clear understanding about college. I had to figure it out on my own," Jackson said. "I promised myself that one day I was going to give back to students who grew up like me, needing guidance and support."

Jackson, who started seeing clients in 2009, said continuously watching people heal emotionally and become better versions of themselves, has shown her time and time again how important counseling is. Jackson believes in the benefits of group counseling, a program FAMU counseling services provides to its students.

"Group counseling is a tenet of therapy that involves the development of a safe space where 6-8 people who have similar issues can come and discuss their feelings,



Photo courtesy of Stewart and Jackson

Marquis Stewart, 34, and Alicia Jackson, 41.

thoughts and emotions. It is a great place to make new friends, socialize, and help prevent isolation," she said. "At FAMU,

specifically, I have led depression, anxiety,

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Class of 2000 pays it forward

Rachel Daniels

Staff writer

Two weeks ago, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University announced that the freshman class of 2000 had raised the most money for the university in 2020. The class to raise the most funds is traditionally acknowledged during homecoming.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, homecoming was canceled, preventing the class of 2000 from celebrating but the pandemic didn't disrupt the class from raising the money needed to aid students.

Last year, the freshman class of 1999 raised \$200,000. This year the freshman class of 2020 had a goal to raise \$250,000 to prove to the 1999 class that they would outdo them.

The class of 2000 surpassed the 1999

class by raising \$275,000.

Roshell RinkinsIt, senior director of grants administration at the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation and fundraising chair for the freshman class of 2000, highlighted how essential it was for the 2000 class to take the initiative to raise money because of the pandemic.

"Now more than ever, FAMU needs us. It feels really great to be able to make such a sizable gift to FAMU, and to do it during a global pandemic further cements our commitment to the university," Rinkins said during a conversation with the author of FAMU Forward, Andrew Skerritt.

More than 300 alumni, family, and friends participated in their campaign



Photo courtesy Famu Forward

A few of FAMU class of 2000 members.

through building relationships with each other, inventiveness and cohesion. The class of 2000 also created a leadership committee that represented the dynamic

class' representation.

The class of 2000 took the initiative to

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Social media is not a good substitute for credible news

Jeffrey Dean

Staff writer

Why look at the newspaper when you can look at your newsfeed? In this day and age, more people go to social media sites like Twitter for the latest news.

“I can’t tell you the last time I watched the news or looked up a current event. I just pay attention to what is trending so I know what is going on in the world. I’m usually the first to know what happens,” said Elizabeth Young, a student at Florida State University.

Twitter has made it quicker to receive information because of the simplicity of tweeting and its ability to spread quickly. Most young adults prefer to use social media for news considering it requires less reading and is more entertaining.

Anyone can post on social media and anyone can see it, so how can one be cer-



Photo courtesy [Avert.org](https://www.avert.org)

tain that what we are reading is true? The thing is, you cannot be certain because not everyone who posts a fact is a credible source.

Fake news spreads like wildfire on social media because it is more entertaining than the truth. False news is retweeted more and spread farther than real news.

“Falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information, and the effects were more pronounced for false political news than for false news about terrorism, natural disasters, science, urban legends, or financial information,” wrote a team, led by Sinan Aral of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the journal *Science*. “It took the truth about six times as long as falsehood to reach 1,500 people.”

At all times, what we know and what we see is being monitored by the government and tech giants. Everything we see

on social media is being controlled and can be used as a way to manipulate users.

When posting on social media, you have to follow the guidelines or else it can be taken down. Imagine how many posts were taken down that have never been seen exposing the many secrets that go on in the world that we are not supposed to know.

The people spreading false information are not always robots. Most of the time they are real people with a lot of followers or who are verified with the blue checkmark. People with a lot of followers are called “influencers” for a reason. They influence the way their supporters and followers think, feel, or want.

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What pandemic? Las Vegas is lit

Ahriyan Adams

Staff writer



Photo courtesy [iPhotoStock](https://www.iPhotoStock.com)

Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Landmark.

Travel prices have dropped to an all-time low as a pandemic continues to lay siege to our country. With only so much to do during a pandemic, and an increased opportunity to travel, many have taken this time to explore new destinations.

As of late, Las Vegas has been a des-

tinuation for countless tourists, especially for millennials.

Las Vegas is known as the ultimate playground with the famous saying “what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” Many are drawn to the city for its vibrant nightlife, casinos, shopping, dining and, of course, the entertainment.

With courses being primarily remote it has allowed students to multitask and even be in two places at once. Students have taken this opportunity to travel while learning, creating memories and changing the reality of what being a college student looks like.

Studies have shown that younger generations are not taking COVID-19 as seriously as older generations and continue to live life considering the circumstances.

“I recently traveled to Vegas for my

friend’s birthday,” Imani Edwards, a senior college student, said. “The city is pretty open as if corona doesn’t exist. Visiting malls, the casino, bars, and restaurants everything seemed clean.”

Since the virus is not easily identified and often shows no forms of symptoms, it is hard to restrict or limit activities. As I recently traveled to Las Vegas, I too noticed that the city seemed fairly open compared to other cities. Individuals still wore masks, but the city was full of people who were ready for life to return to what we once considered normal.

Traveling during this time raises a lot of red flags. As the pandemic has shifted and moved through various phases the world is slowly but surely fully reopening. The advice of quarantine between travel periods has died down and people are

traveling freely. Following the guidelines enforced with airline companies and places of businesses to millennials that are justified as enough.

“The amount of traveling has noticeably increased over the past couple of months,” said Jawaun Clarke, a junior in college. “Being somewhat isolated for a long period, I was eager to travel to Las Vegas as it was a city that seemed to be primarily open.”

Since cities such as Las Vegas are opening and running operations as normal it sparks the urge for people to explore after being in hiding for what seems like an eternity. Though COVID-19 is still very real, people have accepted the accommodations of how we now live life and are not letting that take away from traveling.

Kamala Harris' rise to leadership is historic

Daniel Londono

Staff writer

After one of the most tumultuous presidential elections in recent memory, the results are in: Joe Biden will be the 46th President of the United States. This is of course an achievement in itself, but Biden is a career politician who has spent nearly 50 years in D.C., so his nomination and the subsequent win was hardly the most groundbreaking. What's more interesting, however, is the election of his Vice President-elect, Kamala Harris.

A little over a hundred years since women in the United States were granted the right to vote and Harris has made history on numerous fronts, becoming the first woman and Indian American to reach the White House, and only the second African American to do so. Keeping that in mind, Harris is indeed a win for progressive voters, but not without certain caveats.

Harris has been under fire for some decisions made during her career as both District Attorney of San Francisco and Attorney General of California, specifically pushing for "tough on crime" policies that fly in the face of her stance as a progressive reformer today. It is important to be critical of our government officials and hold them accountable for their policy decisions, and to call them out for their choices even if we support their platform. But the fact of the matter is that this is a win for women and people of color as a whole, and it should be recognized as such.

Hilary Clinton made history by becoming the first female major-party candidate for president in 2016. Looking back at the United States and its background, we can see just how notable that accomplishment was for Clinton then and for Harris now.

In the history of the United States, we have had three female candidates for



Photo courtesy The New Yorker

Vice President of the United States, with Geraldine Ferraro in 1984, Sarah Palin in 2008 and Harris herself in 2020. In addition, all 90 former US Presidents and their running mates have consisted of white men except Native American Vice President Charles Curtis in 1924. Any way you view it, Harris has broken gender and ethnic barriers that have remained

in place for centuries and that can not be overlooked.

I spoke with Kiana Green, a third-year animal science pre-veterinary student, to ask her opinion on this historic win for women.

"Having a woman as our new Vice President is wonderful, but having a West Indian woman is the most inspiring part.

Vice President Harris has broken barriers and will continue to do so," said Green. "Especially in a time of racial injustice finally coming to view and slowly being dealt with, her presence is enough to do wonders. With this being said, myself and other people who support her know she's not perfect, and we will definitely hold her to her promises."

Alas, ‘Bad Hair’ misses the mark

Tanasia A. Reed

Staff writer



Photo courtesy The Arizona Republic

Elle Lorraine as Anna Bludso in the film, ‘Bad Hair.’

A new Hulu horror-comedy, “Bad Hair,” tackles the unspoken issue between Black women and their hair in an image-obsessed society. The underlying messages of this film attempted to shed light on the ongoing battle for Black women to adhere to false beauty standards, despite their preferences.

The Justin Simien-directed film is set in 1989 where the main character, Anna Bludso (played by Elle Lorraine), is a young woman in the music television industry whose hard work has continuously gone unnoticed. She decides to get a weave based on the recommendations and weave-filled representation of Black women on television, even though her natural hair was comforting, and her close friends disagreed.

She later finds that her new weave may have bad intentions to take over her life, which is where the horror comes in to play.

While the director decided to tackle such a home-hitting topic for many Black women, it constantly felt like it was missing something — actual dialogue regarding the inner struggles for the Black

women involved. The movie spent a lot of time plot-setting, drawing out long horror-action scenes, and establishing almost every character of the very large cast without focusing on the long-lasting effects of hair discrimination and unapologetic hair-loving journeys of the individual characters.

The movie seems to lack focus for the foundational message with its overly saturated satire and horror. It hardly addresses the pressure from society that natural hair is not beautiful, which continues to hold strong in the workforce. It makes the idea of “good hair” and “bad hair” seem like micro-aggressions against Black women, but these experiences are not always subtle and continue to make more Black women self-conscious and irate toward their hair.

While this movie confronted how society’s obsession with the “perfect image” has constantly left out natural Black women, the movie could have done a better job of being more inclusive to women who

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FAMUAN

autumn

THIS or THAT

black friday OR cyber monday

apple pie OR pumpkin pie

Halloween OR Thanks giving

fireplace OR bonfire

cornmaze OR pumpkin patch

hot chocolate OR apple cider

POST TO YOUR STORY AND TAG 3 FRIENDS

Football and other sports canceled spring season

Marissa Stubbs

Sports Editor

Fans, students and alumni were looking forward to the return of football and other sports at Florida A&M in the spring. However, the university will be opting out of the 2021 spring season for football and two other sports, Athletic Director Kortne Gosha told The Famuan this afternoon.

Both basketball programs are scheduled to proceed as planned as are the baseball and softball teams.

FAMU rival Bethune-Cookman University announced last month that it was canceling all sports for the academic year, which left FAMU with only four scheduled football games at the time.

Although the athletic department's decision has disappointed many student athletes, there are some who are still optimistic about competing at a later date.

Jaylyn Scott, a junior health science student and 400 meter runner, says this decision is tough to accept but it may be for the best.

"I was disappointed, but I thought about the safety precautions. This would have been my first year of eligibility for the MEAC conference. Although we don't have a season, I just know we are going to keep working and get back to it soon," Scott said.

FAMU track and field runners were practicing five days a week at 6 a.m. As their expected season started to approach, the Rattlers started gearing their practices toward upcoming indoor meets.

Morgan Shortridge, a senior health science major and high jumper for the Rattlers, says she was expecting the season to happen.

"We started to practice for the indoor season, so when I heard the news the first thing that came to mind was disappointment. Academically I'm a senior but for



Photo courtesy Phelan M. Ebenhack/Orlando Sentinel

There will be no FAMU football games this spring.

track, I still have a few more seasons of eligibility left," Shortridge said.

Leading up to the spring season, student athletes were participating in weekly temperature checks and COVID 19 tests. Student athletes were also required to wear masks in the weight rooms and the field house.

Gosha said he was looking forward to celebrating his first HBCU homecoming but knows this decision is the best for the university.

"Rattler fans were all expecting to see sports this year but then the pandemic hit. It was a lot of uncharted territory for all of us. To shut everything down, there were a lot of mental frustrations with our student athletes. However, we've found strength in each other," he said.

Finding strength in each other is something the Rattlers will continue to do throughout the pandemic. Although the university has opted out of volleyball, football and indoor track, athletes are still

allowed to practice on campus.

Despite the absence of three major sports, the women's and men's basketball teams will participate in a 16 game conference schedule that will be played over a nine week period.

The women's basketball team is set to take on the Florida State Seminoles for the first time in 16 seasons. The game will take place Nov. 25 in the Lawson Center.

HBCU aquatics programs: What happened to them?

Deja Boyd
Staff writer

Historically Black colleges and universities aquatics programs have gradually deteriorated one-by-one over the last few decades. Due to a lack of support from the college and university administration to limited or depleted funding, HBCU aquatics was not able to sustain these very important programs.

HBCUs have a history of initiating positive change for Black communities and should be leaders in exposing aquatic opportunities to save lives, provide education, and support economic growth.

At several HBCUs, there are swimming pools that are not utilized to their fullest capacity which means students and staff are missing opportunities to learn life-saving skills that can be passed down through generations.

“Due to the change of hands in administration and lack of support, I quit coaching swimming,” said former Florida A&M University’s Swim Coach and Director of Aquatics Center, Jorge L. Olaves.

FAMU’s backyard sits a clean saltwater 25-meter pool, which is half the size of an Olympic sized pool. This is formerly the hub for some of the best swimmers in the [nation](#). In 1964, the swimming pool was an added feature to the university and attracted many students and faculty. By the 1980s, FAMU’s swim team had about 25 swimmers which are enough to make 6 relays, 4 persons per relay, and an alternate.

By 2002, FAMU’s swimming team was the reigning HBCU swimming champions in their division. Three years later, the university was seeking donations for the men’s and women’s swimming and diving team. The program needed almost a quarter of a million dollars for it to remain active. Although the program could not receive the support and funding it needed to continue, FAMU’s Aquatics

program has opened many career opportunities especially for some of the former swimmers of the team.

Gia Wright, North Carolina A&T University’s former women’s swim team coach, said “Administration at the university was hesitant to the funding issues which caused us to lose the swimming program at A&T.”

Wright also mentioned that the swim team and other aquatics staff created a petition to keep the swimming program active. Nearly one thousand students signed the petition in support of keeping the program, but the administration still decided to disband the swim team.

In 2016, North Carolina A&T University’s women’s swim team dissolved, which left Howard University the only last standing HBCU NCAA Division I swim program.

“Budgetary issues and recruiting swimmers who mirrored the academic morale of the university and also the skill set that is needed has been our biggest challenges,” says Nicholas Askew, Howard University’s Swimming and Diving Team Coach.

Howard University is in a unique space. Since the program is the last of its kind, Askew mentions the amount of pressure that comes with it. He also mentions that the importance of Black representation in aquatics will show Black children that there are great career opportunities within aquatics.

Additionally, as HBCUs struggle with funding, using swim facilities to their maximum capacity can provide income opportunities through programming for competition, water safety lessons and recreational enjoyment.

HBCUs are the exact or ideal community that should discuss the missing swimming programs and the importance



Alabama A&M University 1983 swim team.

Photo courtesy www.al.com

of learning how to swim within the Black community, however it seems like the administration at these HBCUs did not find the need to continue to support these aquatic programs at their colleges and universities.

In most cases, without administrative support, programs will not last that much longer.