

Mixed verdict for first week of HyFlex classes

Lauryn McDaniels

Staff Writer

After months of not being on campus, more students are adjusting to having HyFlex classes or FAMU Flex classes. Before being able to come back on campus all students and faculty were required to get tested for COVID-19.

Students and faculty coming to campus must get tested biweekly with undergraduate students Jan. 25-30 and faculty and graduate students Feb. 1-6.

Some students have mixed feelings about going back to in-person classes and are concerned about their health and safety. Some are also happy to be almost back to normal.

"Honestly the first week was a little rigorous but it's going to take some getting used to again. I'm very comfortable, I prefer having in-person classes because that's a part of my learning style," FAMU senior computer science student Ennis McCorvey IV said.

Remote learning has taken a toll on a lot of students and their learning styles with some seeing their grades suffer.

Health is a major concern for students who must attend in-person or HyFlex classes. "I think it was entirely too premature. It brings me to anxiety to go to class when I know there are people around me who may not be taking COVID as seriously as me," junior animal science student Brianna Lambert said.

Professors were sent emails to comment on the change to HyFlex classes, but they did not respond.

According to the state Department



Photo courtesy The [phoenix.com](http://the-phoenix.com)

of Health, daily new cases are averaging more than 200 a day in Leon County. Hospitalizations have increased from 129 to 135 in the last week.

This causes students who have to attend in-person classes to worry. "There is no way we can have classes and have so many people coming in contact with each

other on campus without a significant increase," Lambert said.

With more in-person contact this could also promote classes going back to remote or even a complete shut down.

"I believe that remote learning is the direction we are headed as an educational system. The issue is academic integrity,

and the wanting of personal relationships with constituents attending university," junior business administration student Nigel Reese said.

HyFlex classes could be a step toward a promising future to get things back to normal and have more in-person classes and even on-campus events.

Here's how FAMU plans to use \$125 million grant

Aiyana Ishmael

Staff Writer



Photo courtesy famunews.com

Florida A&M University is one of many historically Black colleges and universities receiving a portion of the national COVID-19 relief bill.

FAMU is receiving a substantial amount of money from the federal government in hopes to better financially support HBCUs, especially during the pandemic. The bill was approved in late December by Congress with a sum of \$900 billion. Public schools are receiving \$54.3 billion and higher education institutions are set for \$22.7 billion in emergency relief aid.

U.S. Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC), one of the proponents in proposing the debt cancellation, said this relief would help

HBCUs invest “back into their students at a critical time when student assistance is needed the most.” According to University Business, through the years, 44 HBCUs have taken out loans to cover costs to build and repair infrastructure such as libraries and dorms.

Although there is a large financial support being given to Florida A&M, the money is meant for very specific usage.

The major portion of this relief grant for higher education institutions is focused on debt cancellation, specifically for HBCUs. Additionally, the grant is designed to better support the use of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications and an expansion of

Pell grants.

“This is game-changing for HBCUs. It is an unprecedented gift of approximately \$125 million to FAMU and comes during a very challenging year,” FAMU President Larry Robinson said in a release. “This is a great act on behalf of HBCUs, especially considering that our students will be key beneficiaries. We are extremely grateful to our supporters in Washington for crafting this stimulus legislation.”

Moreover, FAMU will receive \$125 million in debt forgiveness as part of the federal coronavirus relief package adopted by Congress, including: \$70 million for the FAMU Towers residential housing construction project and \$55 million for

refinanced housing.

According to FAMU spokesman Andrew Skerit, this money from the government will greatly offset the cost of building the latest residential halls, FAMU Towers.

“This expansion of the Pell grant program recognizes the immense needs of the students who attend HBCUs. It’s an investment that will pay significant dividends for generations to come,” Robinson said.

This substantial amount of financial support FAMU is receiving will greatly impact the expansion of the university and how it will further assist its students in their academic success.

Robinson commends students hours before a new curfew is imposed

Gabriela Holmes

Staff Writer

Florida A&M University's daily schedule has shifted drastically in less than a year, thanks to COVID-19. The administration at FAMU has said it is working hard to make sure the university and its students continue to sustain their excellence through these unprecedented times.

FAMU began HyFlex classes last week, and President Larry Robinson and the senior leadership team held a virtual State Of the Student address and Town Hall on Thursday to talk about how the spring semester will be conducted.

Robinson began his remarks with warm words of gratitude to the staff and students for their dedication and hard work.

"The biggest threat to our welfare as a university as people is the COVID-19 pandemic," Robinson said.

Several hours after the town hall, FAMU's dean of students noted the FAMU community that the university is imposing yet another curfew for all students living on campus. It is the third such curfew FAMU has imposed this academic year.

As for COVID-19, FAMU is the most effective testing site in this region, Robinson added, with over 218,000 administered tests at its site at Bragg Memorial Stadium.

Robinson explained how FAMU has maintained its record of success and discussed plans to ensure the future excellence of Florida A&M University.

Following Robinson, SGA President Xavier McClinton and SGA Vice President



The Eternal Flame, an iconic symbol at FAMU.

Logo courtesy famuedu.edu

Carrington Whigham addressed their achievements in the fall semester along with future plans for this spring.

These achievements entail advocating for a \$50,000 increase in next year's budget to make sure FAMU's Rec Center is able to keep its doors open longer.

Along with working closely with FAMU's office of government relationships, the Florida student association wants to make sure that FAMU's state funding isn't negatively affected by projected COVID-related state budget cuts.

McClinton said.

He said he wants SGA to stage seminars with financial aid to help answer questions and provide transparency on how students' dollars are being disbursed.

Beyond the COVID-19 talk, Provost Maurice Edington revealed that spring commencement has not been confirmed to be virtual or in person. He said that an announcement will be made in March.

"I wanted to commend the students on their persistence," Edington said.

"FAMU Towers will be come a fresh-

man residence hall along with Sampson and Young, while Polkinghorne Village will become an upperclassmen residence hall," housing director Carrie Gavin said.

Edington reiterated that spring break is canceled. The semester will end a week earlier than the original plan.

FAMU also invested thousands of dollars in faculty training so that teachers can adapt to the remote teaching environment and there will be additional training this summer to prepare for the fall semester.

Slowly but surely, Florida seniors get the vaccine

Haleigh Porter

Staff writer

As schools continue to struggle to find their footing in the 10th month of the global pandemic, Florida begins to roll out plans that may be promising.

On Tuesday, Governor Ron DeSantis announced that the state has registered over 400,000 seniors in the last week who have received the COVID-19 vaccination shot. According to DeSantis, 700,000 total seniors have been vaccinated for the virus.

The state has prioritized vaccination centers being accessible for the senior community.

“Every single county now has at least one place where [seniors] can go. Some have many different places. We think that that’s important,” DeSantis said at a news conference. Vaccinations are being administered at some hospitals, churches and Publix grocery stores.

As schools begin to ramp back up for in-person instruction, Florida continues

to pride itself in providing for those who are most at risk — people who are 65 years old and older. Central vaccination locations have been set up with seniors in mind, many within a few miles radius.

A local Black church could be considered to have a ripple effect of vaccinating those most affected who are from underserved communities. Over 500 African American seniors were able to receive their first dose of the vaccination at Bethel AME church last weekend.

This week Florida State University has confirmed it will be administering the vaccine and that the eligibility list has expanded. The vaccine will be administered at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center in two doses. Unlike Bethel AME church, FSU offers the vaccination by appointment only.

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare has also worked to vaccinate Leon County residents. TMH has partnered with



Photo courtesy MGN Online

the Leon County Department of Health to distribute 6,000 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to Leon County seniors age 65 and up.

Despite vaccination efforts, the number of total cases in Leon County has sur-

passed 20,000, according to the Florida Department of Health. Florida reached an all-time high of new cases on Jan. 8, weighing in at 19,530 across the state.

Locally, out of 9 Leon County Schools, [Click link to continue: https://bit.ly/39wR0gQ](https://bit.ly/39wR0gQ)

Local food banks fill a very real need

Gabrielle Hall

Staff writer

The coronavirus pandemic has caused considerable hardships for many people in America. With the biggest economic recession since the Great Depression, a lot of families have not been able to afford to buy groceries or clothes. Food banks in Tallahassee have offered these essentials to the homeless and families in need.

According to Feeding America, 80 percent of food banks are serving more people than they were at this time last year. Food banks are distributing more food and accepting more volunteers to keep up with the demand for assistance.

Project Anne provides those in need with groceries twice a month on Thursdays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Annie Johnson, executive director of Project Anne, says that even though there is a pandemic going on, she has received ongoing sup-



Photo courtesy Gabrielle Hall

Project Anne, Inc. accepts food and clothing donations from the community.

port and donations throughout the year.

“We get so much food,” Johnson said. “I put some of it outside, I fixed bags and it fills up the bags, I have a lot of dona-

tions — monetary too.”

Johnson says when the pandemic first started volunteers stopped coming. But as months went on many younger volunteers stepped up to help.

Churches have implemented food banks to assist their members and communities surrounding them. Dorothy Davis, a member of Innovation Baptist Church, is over the operations of the pantry at the church.

“We were limiting the volunteering to the church members only,” Davis said. “But because of the pandemic it’s open to anyone who wants to help.”

Innovation Baptist Church’s food pantry was open twice a month, but due to the limited donations and resources they are only available every second Saturday of the month from 9 to noon.

Many of the food banks around Tallahassee are concerned about food security for college students. Innovation Baptist church has made efforts to reach out to the college students who need assistance.

“Pastor Leland was concerned about the community, but he also said what about the students — a lot of the students are hungry too,” Davis said.

The food pantry on FAMU’s campus was started to assist students who needed groceries and may not be able to afford them. FAMU spokesman Andrew Skerritt says food insecurity among students was a big factor.

“The pantry is open for students on and off campus,” Skerritt said. “You’d be surprised at how many students struggle with food insecurity. So, the pantry helps those students who desperately need it.”

Biden's pledge would benefit FAMU, other HB-

Alexys Sutton

Staff writer

President-elect Joe Biden has already foreshadowed his goals for his presidency as far as HBCUs are concerned.

The 47th president's campaign website highlighted his main election points, including his plan for "education beyond high school" in which he mentions providing funding for minority-based colleges including HBCUs.

To be more specific Biden intends to invest \$70 billion into the country's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), Alaska Native-serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions (ANNHs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), and Native American-serving Non-tribal Institutions



Photo courtesy Getty Images
President and Vice President-Elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris and coming together in front of the American flag.

(NASNTIs). This would be one of the largest investments any president has made into minority-based colleges. It may seem

somewhat improbable but, given that our future vice president is herself an HBCU graduate (Howard University) it seems

more likely that this pledge may come to fruition.

This investment has the potential to change the success and rate at which these colleges compete.

As far as funding is concerned, while many minority-based colleges' average tuition is lower than that of the competing predominantly white schools, the average household income for students attending these institutions is significantly lower. Unfortunately this doesn't seem to be accounted for when it comes to funding.

In 2020, Florida State University receiving a total of \$88.9 million in funding from the state, including \$46.8 million of its own institutional investment, along with \$42 million from the state. Florida A&M University received a total of \$29 million, including \$13.7 million from

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Masks rarely stay on at parties

Ashleigh Hall

Staff writer



Photo courtesy EventBrite

Prime Time was extra busy during its brunch last Sunday.

With COVID-19 rates increasing day by day, it seems as if some people were determined to party with big crowds before returning to in-person classes.

This past holiday weekend, there were brunches, lunches, open club events, and plenty of house parties as students

enjoyed an extra day off from classes. The parties seemed to have plenty of people, drinks and food. The only thing was missing: masks.

It has been mandated that masks be worn upon entry into certain establishments, but once inside they are no longer strictly enforced to be worn. For example, Prime Time, a daytime and nighttime restaurant that offers a variety of alcoholic beverages and food along with daily drinking specials, hosted a brunch last Sunday that quickly turned in to a party with plenty of people. There were students, alumni and Tallahassee residents in attendance.

"It was a highly advertised party so of course lots of people were in attendance, I think people should be good as long as they have on their mask, but once drinking became involved the less people you

saw wearing one," said Tamare Brackins, a Tallahassee resident and club owner in Atlanta.

As in-person classes resumed this past week for the first time since March, many fear that the parties could pose a health threat and cause an outbreak on campus.

"I mean I did enjoy myself this weekend but I kept my mask on at all times. Everybody didn't though, and there's no way to tell who could have contracted COVID and who could not. The main concern is that tests don't show accurate results for up to a week following transmission of COVID, which is scary because we returned back to classes only two days after last weekend," Dae'Shavon Johnson, a junior at FAMU, said.

FAMU has hosted town halls and stressed to students that if they are showing any signs or symptoms to stay home

from classes, but you can also be asymptomatic with COVID-19.

To help transition and combat a major outbreak FAMU has given out Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits to students on and off campus. The kits include one disposable mask, one pair of gloves, two pouches of hand sanitizer, and two alcohol wipes.

Unlike Johnson, student Tatyana Dixon is excited to return to campus for the remainder of her freshman year while following CDC guidelines.

"Being that is our only break this semester I think FAMU is prepared to handle any outbreaks or mishaps at this point. We've had a whole year off from in-person classes, while FAMU carefully planned a step closer to resuming normal college life," Dixon said.

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Ongoing pandemic leads to new travel policies

Deiana Abdel-Gadir

Staff writer

As the pandemic continues unabated into the new year, new orders and policies have been set in place to control the spread of the virus. For the safety of the public, international travel has been placed with pre-cautionary procedures following travelers' return to the U.S. The Department of State has announced that all passengers arriving in the U.S. from a foreign country must present a negative test result or documentation of recovery.

In an order effective Jan 25, the CDC said, "Pre-departure testing does not eliminate all risk. However, when pre-departure testing is combined with other measures such as self-monitor-

ing for symptoms of COVID-19, wearing masks, social distancing, and hand hygiene, it can make travel safer by reducing spread on conveyances, in transportation hubs, and at destinations."

With the new policies in place, Americans who have already planned their vacations for the upcoming year now must adjust their travel checklist to include a COVID-19 testing site in their itinerary. Future traveler, Ayesha Palmer grew concerns for her group trip to the Dominican Republic due to confusion on how the group would find testing in another country.

"At first as a group we thought we would need to cancel the trip,



Photo courtesy Health Magazine

COVID-19 Testing Passport.

but then I contacted the hotel and found out that they offer rapid testing at the resort. They also

told us that if we did become sick, the resort would also pay through

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Some local CBD shops thriving

Tatyiana Hayes

Staff writer



Photo by Tatyiana Hayes

Elaina Eyeler, an employee at CBD+Bar.

Tallahassee's CBD shops around Tallahassee appear to have developed a loyal customer

base even with the pandemic on a rise.

Employees at different CBD shops and bars around town explained the effects that the pandemic has had and the differences between them was mostly based on their clientele's age range.

Shops that are experiencing major downturns in their business have a clientele range of between 50-60 years old. Several shops are geared more toward college students and have thrived during the pandemic.

Tallulah CBD+Bar is a shop that has a clientele that ranges from all age groups and they have a space that is large enough to ad-

here to CDC guidelines. Enforcing the "no mask no entry" policy and expanding their shop online to accommodate those who choose not to come in the store.

"Since 2020 was such a dumpster fire, it has been good for business since CBD is awesome," Elaina Eyeler, an employee, said.

Since the pandemic hit, the CBD business experienced a large increase in online sales. For CBD shops like Tallulah-CBD, online sales are just as good as in-store sales. However, shops that have an older clientele have noticed a downfall in both in-store and online business.

Your CBD Store has experi-

enced a 60% drop in sales, even while offering shipping, curbside and pickup.

Jason Krum, the owner of Your CBD Store Tallahassee, acknowledged that he would lose some money due to job cuts. However, he never expected the company's sales to drop as low as they did.

"It's almost liked a switch was cut off," Krum said.

Both Eyeler and Krum explained their gratitude for CBD as it has helped them deal with many complications that they dealt with whether it was physical

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Local hair stylist refuses to let COVID keep her down

Shaqualia Smith

Staff writer

Like many small businesses that have been drastically impacted by the pandemic, Aaliyah Shields has had her share of hardships. The 24-year-old is a hair stylist.

“I was unable to sell hair due to price increasing, and my hair vendor in Korea being closed,” she said.

To keep her business afloat, Shields found a solution to save her business by buying fewer items.

“I would normally buy 20 to 25 wigs, but since the pandemic I have decreased them to 10 to 15,” she said.

According to Fox 13 news in Memphis, a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found the number of active business owners in the country dropped from 15 to 12 million. Black-owned businesses suffered the steepest decline, at 41 percent while white-owned businesses declined by only 17 percent.

To assure that she and her clients are being protected and safe from COVID, Shields implemented safety precautions such as wearing a mask, cleaning tools, capes and chairs after every client, and checking temperatures at the door. Aniya, a devoted client, said: “I felt very comfortable while getting my hair done because of the rules and guidelines that were put into place to make sure that I was safe.”

When COVID caused most of the United States to shut down in March of last year, Shields had to find ways to continue marketing and branding herself.

“I continued to utilize my social media Truly_Laced_ on Instagram, paid Instagram models to promote my products on their Instagram stories or making a post, and I also began selling clothes,” she said.

Shields is the business owner of Truly Laced specializing in lace wig installa-



Aaliyah Shields.

Photo courtesy Jonathan Howard

tions, sew-ins, and more. The name Truly Laced was inspired by feeling beautiful and confident after being touched by the hands of the hair slayer. Once the clients looked into the mirror after the finishing touches, seeing their lace wig coming out of their scalp, they have been truly laced.

Shields declined the help from local government services, and the small business loan also known as the Paycheck Protection Program.

President Donald Trump signed a \$900 billion pandemic relief bill on Dec. 28, including the PPP small business loan. The Paycheck Protection Program is for small businesses with fewer than 300 employees that have seen a decrease of at least 25% during the pandemic. Borrowers can receive up to \$2 million and give businesses more flexibility on how to maintain their business.

Shields used prayer and self-care as

a way to stay in good spirits and stay in good health mentally.

“I had more time to come up with new ideas, and to rest between clients to regroup, clean up and prepare for the next person,” she said.

Due to great customer service, strong reviews online and marketing with 7,000 followers, Shields continues to strategize and come up with new ideas to continue a successful business during this pandemic.

The reality of graduating during the COVID pandemic

Jahmai' Barrow

Staff writer

The last time I walked to campus was a sunny Wednesday. Reporting & Writing I — a sophomore class that I neglected to take until my junior year — began in 15 minutes, and I was 25 minutes out, at the least. Normally, I would have arrived on time, but this day I slept through my alarms, which led me to miss the Venom Shuttle. So I was running late, the air was muggy and I barely glanced up as I walked to campus.

If only I'd known that the ordinary Wednesday I spent on campus would have been the last, I wouldn't have been late.

Relationships end with breakups, jobs end with quitting or firing, and college is one of the few aspects of life that ends with a new start. Or at least I'd thought.

According to theWorld Bank, the global economy is set to experience the deepest recession since World War Two.

More than 90,000 Americans have died, tens of millions are out of work, massive companies are struggling and graduates are entering into what could become one of the hardest job markets in decades.

Graduation is often an anxious time for students because it marks the beginning of a new era, but COVID-19 has created new uncertainties.

The pandemic has left me scrambling to figure out what's next. Optimism is one of the most important things we have during times like these, but quite honestly, I find myself slipping back into old habits of depression and anxiety that I felt I'd beat.

The 2019 Stress in America annual survey from the American Psychological Association found that "zoomers" report the highest average stress level of any

generation, with work and money the two most significant sources of stress.

At first, I was going to graduate school, but right now I can't motivate myself to go. I'm just done with school in general, and I feel like I'm not learning anything; I'm just plugging in the answers to my homework and forgetting about it.

Rather than celebrating with friends, I'm worried about securing a job after graduation while also anticipating what the long-term effects of the pandemic

will be, merely because the situation is so unprecedented.

The pandemic disrupted the events and festivities that I had hoped would mark the culmination of my undergraduate experience. Despite the gloomy outlook, I won't let my internal monologue take over and crush my spirit.

The lessons I got out of the journey have not been altered, which I am grateful to have learned. Even though I'm not sure where to go next, I am hopeful and eager

to see what a future could look like in a pandemic-ridden world.

Advice I'd share with current seniors during this difficult time is to stay resilient. We have to focus on what we can control and let go of what we can't. By doing this we can continue to beat the odds and stay strong.



Graduating during a pandemic is unprecedented.

Photo courtesy Jennifer Luxton/The Seattle Times

College students on the first Black vice president

Shakiria Hopkins
Staff Writer

Now making history, Kamala Harris becomes not only the first female vice president, but the first Black female vice president of the United States of America.

Harris' voice would be crucial when it's time to make decisions like whether to go to war, fight Covid-19, raise taxes and most importantly justice for African Americans. She will be able to advocate for the Black community and speak from their perspective.

As we all watched Biden and Harris getting sworn into office on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021, we were all excited about the future that awaits us. Harris gives Black girls all around the world hope. She gives me hope.

I don't see Harris win as victory just

for Blacks but Americans all over. I don't expect things to change overnight but I do think things are about to change for the betterment of our people.

Lionel Camel, a second year business administration and management student at Edward Waters College, feels a sense of protection now that we have a Black vice president.

"As a Black man in America I didn't feel safe under former President Donald Trump and his administration's leadership," said Camel. "Blacks as a whole are not receiving the proper treatment in the medical aspect especially when it comes to police brutality."



Photo courtesy Alex Wong/Getty Images

Vice President Kamala Harris at the 2021 Inauguration

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Danileigh proves that gatekeeping blackness is important

Deja Boyd
Staff writer

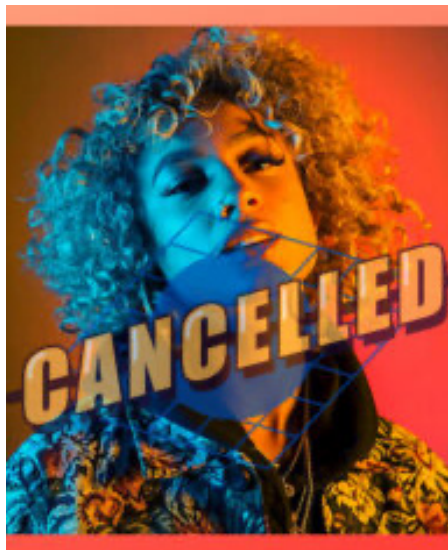


Photo courtesy XXL Mag
DaniLeigh isn't wanted in Black culture.

Many non-Black entertainers, influencers and artists have been accused of "acting Black" or thinking it's okay to use racial slurs in their content because their main audience is Black.

Singer Danileigh is a clear example of a racially ambiguous woman who thinks they can get a pass for using the "N-word" or using other African American euphemisms and colloquialisms to be accepted into Black culture. These types of cultural appropriators are better known as "culture vultures" within the Black community.

Recently, the singer released a snippet of her song, "yellow bone" on social media and the reactions she received from the song were completely fair and justified. The song seems to have encouraged colorism through her lyrics and a lot of her

Black audience was completely against it.

In the song she refers to herself as a "yellow-bone." According to Urban Dictionary, "yellow bone is a term used for lighter skin black women." According to this definition, Danileigh is neither a Black, or light skin woman.

After she posted the snippet, she commented under the post saying, "Why can't I make a song for my light skin baddies? Why y'all think I'm hating on other colors when there are millions of songs speaking on all types? Why y'all so sensitive and take it personal?"

@angiebaddd_ tweeted, "Pro-tip: you can't be a yellow bone when your parents are spicy white. You are a conquistador! Love yourself!"

The Hip Hop Guru (@thhgurutv) posted a Danileigh video in which she didn't

appear remorseful and apologetic about her song. She even went as far as saying that she doesn't see color and mentions that her boyfriend is Black, in an attempt to prove that she is not a colorist, or possible racist.

She used phrases like, "my chocolate man" and having "melanin friends." It's almost equivalent to white people saying, "I'm not racist, I have a Black friend."

@joyzangel tweeted, "So she doesn't see color but made a song about..... COLOR?"

It's so important for Black people to uphold their integrity and pride in their blackness. It's important for Black people to be educated to spot out someone who is violating their culture.

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I just lost my brother and my best friend

Ivy Gray

Staff writer

Growing up with siblings, I always pictured my two brothers and I growing old together. I pictured that I would be the best auntie to my nieces and nephews. I pictured that I, like always, would buy birthday cards for our parents, and just write my brothers' names on it.

Never in a million years did I picture losing my younger brother Siah to a gunshot.

Siah was the youngest of three. Siah and I were 16 months apart. Most people thought we were twins. After hearing it so often, we decided to play along. Siah and I had an unbreakable bond. We shared similar interests. While we did fight, we also would make sure that we knew we loved each other. We supported each other. I would always be front and center at Siah's basketball games cheering him on.

Siah definitely stood out among the family. Siah took everything my older brother Strickland and I did, and made it his own. He was very likable and easy to love.

Siah was a beam of light. While he was quiet and reserved, he let his art speak for him. Siah was talented in many ways. He drew, wrote and produced music as well as had a passion for fashion.

In everything he did, he was an over-achiever. He never took no for an answer.

Siah was a second-year cybersecurity student at Grambling University in Louisiana. He was scheduled to graduate in May of 2023. While he was grateful to follow in the footsteps of both of our parents at Grambling, he always wanted to be a Rattler at heart.

I often spend time alone and question why this could have happened to someone so gentle. At times when I feel like break-



Photo courtesy Ivy Gray

Siah and Ivy Gray.

ing down, I look into my parents' eyes and remember that I must stay strong. I often find myself sitting in Siah's room hoping one day he will just come back.

Siah's death is a wake-up call for our community. Siah is an example on why we as a Black community need to stick together and speak up.

While Georgia has one of the highest gun violence rates in the country, we have the ability to make a change.

I have begun working on a non-profit organization dedicated to acting against gun violence within the Black community. With this non-profit organization, I plan to make a change so that other families will not have to encounter the same pain my family has felt.

December 22 will be the day I never forget. Three days before Christmas, I

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Baseball team aims to defend conference title

Jelani Wheeler

Staff Writer

With the season quickly approaching the FAMU baseball team is preparing to finally hit the field.

After an early end to the 2020 season due to COVID-19, the Rattlers have had to make some adjustments for their upcoming schedule.

Since September the team has had to add COVID testing to its weekly practice schedule. The NCAA has mandated this in order to allow athletes to compete this spring. With cases still surging, the season may be impacted by the Biden administration's new protocols.

"We've had a lot of time for one because our season was cut short in March last year," head coach Jamie Shouppe said.

"We had a good fall. Our fall season was not cut short; we waited a little longer to begin the fall this year. We waited longer in the fall because we wanted to develop the best practice plan."

During the fall, the team had about nine players out at one time. Three players actually had COVID and the other six had contact tracings.

While staying physically in shape, the team had to also remain mentally strong.

According to the NCAA's Student-Athlete COVID-19 Well-being Study, a majority of participants reported experiencing high rates of mental distress since the outset of the pandemic. Over a third reported experiencing sleep difficulties, more than a quarter reported feeling sadness and a



Photo courtesy FAMU Athletics

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Rudy Hubbard makes history — again

Jelani Wheeler

Staff writer



Photo courtesy famuedu

Rudy Hubbard.

Rudy Hubbard earlier this week became only the fourth Rattler coach to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Hubbard had his most successful seasons as a Rattler in 1977-79. He accumulated a record of 83-48-3 in his career at FAMU.

Hubbard grew up in a small town outside of Youngstown, Ohio. He attended Ohio State University where he played running back.

Shortly after graduating Hubbard was hired as an assistant coach to the legendary Woody Hayes at his alma mater. Hubbard was the first African-American coach at Ohio State.

He then transitioned to be FAMU's head coach in 1974.

"Coach Hubbard brought the pro-

cess of how major colleges run football programs to FAMU," said Vaughn Wilson, an All-American punter under Hubbard and a former athletic administrator at FAMU. "In essence I feel like he helped all of Black colleges. After FAMU became so dominant, other HBCUs emulated his methods."

Wilson added: "He was also just a master recruiter. He brought excellent athletes that could've played anywhere in the country."

In 1977 the Rattlers accomplished a perfect season with a record of 11-0. Also, in 1977 and 1978 Hubbard led the football team to back to back Black College Football national championships and conference titles.

According to a FAMU press release, one year after winning the national title,

Hubbard's Rattlers claimed another milestone when they defeated University of Miami, 16-13. From 1974-78, Hubbard won five straight Orange Blossom Classics, which annually pitted Florida A&M against another HBCU. The numerous standout players he coached included College Football Hall of Famer and three-time All-America offensive guard Tyrone McGriff. Hubbard was inducted into the Florida A&M University Sports Hall of Fame in 1990.

"Even though I didn't get to experience his time here at FAMU, I know that this is a milestone and achievement not only for him but for the entire university," said Jeremiah McCollum, a former Student Athlete Advisory Committee vice-presi-

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Students have to pay to stream home games despite mandatory fees

Vincent Jones Jr.

Staff writer

As COVID-19 continues to run its course, the world of sports continues to adapt and make the necessary changes to continue on during this time of uncertainty. The Florida A&M University men's basketball team is still awaiting to play the remaining scheduled home games due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The culture of the university is synonymous with the student participation at sporting events. In the event that there were to be home more games this year, students would still not be authorized to enter Al Lawson Center to watch in-person as their beloved Rattlers play.

As an alternative, the athletic department has offered an option to pay a one-time subscription fee of \$6.95 to watch games virtually for the entire year. Being that the university does not charge money for home games for any sport, this is a significant change.

Athletic Director Kortne Gosha said that the department is still moving in the right direction as they plan to have a successful year despite the many disparities.

"We have lost several game guarantees due to COVID so the impact has definitely changed how we operate," Gosha said. "We are hopeful that the streaming service will give our fans an opportunity to invest in us as well as stay engaged. We are focused on finishing the year strong as we move toward the future of our department."

Ultimately it is up to the students and fans to decide if they would indeed pay to watch games to compensate for not being

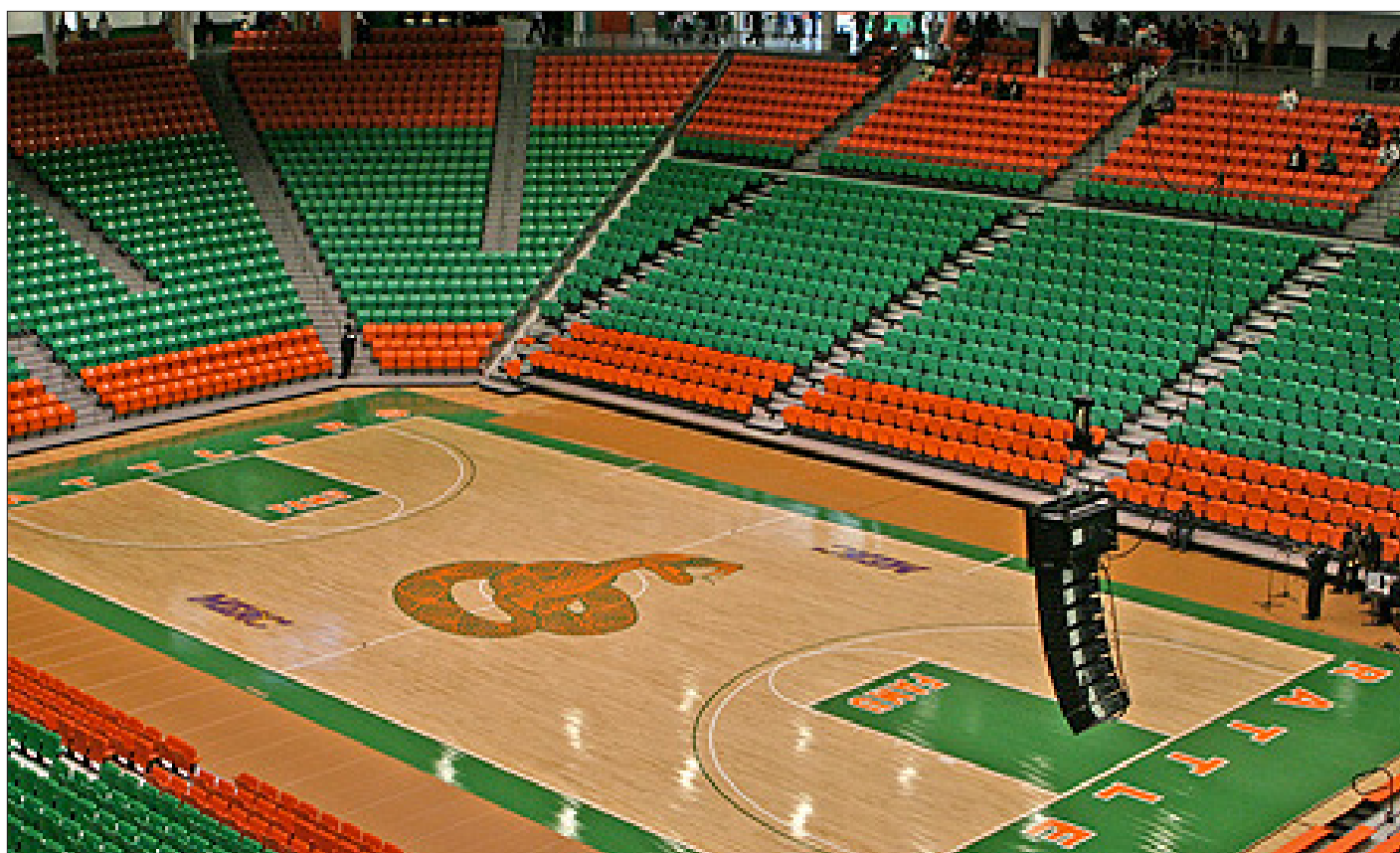


Photo courtesy famuedu.edu

Fans aren't allowed to attend home games this season.

allowed to watch games physically.

Freshman Zoe Hightower believes that the price of the subscription is worth it.

"Honestly it is not bad and for me as a freshman being that in high school we had to pay for things like this anyway," Hightower said. "Six dollars to support someone or a group of people is perfectly fine, I wouldn't mind doing it at all."

Freshman Jasean Coleman also said that the one-time fee to watch his peers play is something that he feels others should do.

"It is more than reasonable because if you do not have a way to physically be there then paying a subscription is not that bad especially compared to other services that we pay for," said Coleman.

"I think that the option is extremely rational to substitute for what we can't have."

FAMU basketball does not return to the Al Lawson Center until Saturday, Feb. 20, against the North Carolina A&T State Aggies.