



Historically Black  
Colleges and  
Universities (HBCU)  
Advisory Council

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed  
*Chair*

Dr. James Ammons

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Rep. Ken Brass

Mr. Preston Castille

Ms. Jasmine  
Brown-DeRousselle

Sen. Royce Duplessis

Dr. Rochelle Ford

Mr. Richard Gallot Jr.

Dr. Aubra Gantt

Rep. Jason Hughes

Sen. Katrina  
Jackson-Andrews

Rep. Edmond Jordan

Dr. Martin Lemelle

Dr. Larissa Littleton-Steib

Mr. Michael McClanahan

Dr. Orlando McMeans

Mr. John Pierre

Sen. Ed Price

Sec. Susana Schowen

Mr. Dennis J. Shields

Dr. Reynold Verret

Ms. Stephanie L. Willis

**HBCU ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Tuesday, March 19, 2024**  
**Claiborne Building, Suite 6-200**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Board of Regents
Dr. Aubra Gantt	SUSLA
Dr. James Ammons	SUNO
Sen. Gerald Boudreaux	Designee, Senate Education Committee
Dr. Ceeon Smith	Proxy, Dillard University
Mr. John Pierre	Southern Law Center
Mr. Dennis Shields	SUBR, SU System
Ms. Jasmine Brown DeRouselle	Designee, LED
Mr. Ron Brade	Proxy, Xavier University of LA
Dr. Orlando McMeans	SU Ag Center
Mr. Richard Gallot	UL System
Ms. Quanda Charles	Proxy, Louisiana Workforce Commission
Dr. Connie Walton	Grambling State University
Rep. Ken Brass	House Education Committee
Ms. Stephanie Willis	ACLU
Mr. Michael McClanahan	NAACP
Rep. Jason Hughes	Designee, Speaker of the House
Mr. Preston Castille	BESE
<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Sen. Ed Price	Designee, Senate President
Sen. Royce Duplessis	LA Legislative Black Caucus
Rep. Edmond Jordan	LA Legislative Black Caucus
Ms. Alexa Johnson	Student Member, Grambling
Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer	Urban League of Louisiana
Dr. Larissa Littleton Steib	Delgado Community College

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The HBCU Advisory Council met on Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Chair Dr. Kim Hunter Reed called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was established.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Reed asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2023, and October 20, 2023, meetings.

**On motion of President Rick Gallot, seconded by President Dennis Shields, the Council approved the minutes of April 18, 2023, and October 20, 2023, meetings.**

## WELCOME/HBCU DAY OVERVIEW

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed extended a welcome to the returning and new Advisory Council members. Ms. Brianna Golden provided an overview of the agenda for HBCU Day at the Capitol and additional instructions. Dr. Reed also acknowledged Mr. Franklyn Simmons and his team at Pepsi for sponsoring the 2024 HBCU Day at the Capitol.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dr. Reed invited legislators on the Council to share any legislative updates. Senator Gerald Boudreaux expressed his appreciation for and the necessity of the HBCU Advisory Council. He also indicated his appreciation for the leadership within the Board of Regents and the role the Regents has played during recent Senate Finance hearings. In anticipation of budget cuts to higher education in coming years, Senator Boudreaux explained that HBCUs should continue to work together, because there is strength in numbers. He also distributed a list of legislative bills impacting higher education.

Representative Ken Brass discussed several bills he authored in collaboration with the Board of Regents, such as capital outlay service projects and career and technical education regarding dual enrollment. He also shared that he had participated in a ribbon-cutting at the new Westbank Workforce Training Center at Donaldsonville High School, which is a partnership between Ascension Parish Public Schools and River Parishes Community College (RPCC). The training center will allow high school students to get hands-on experience in trades (such as welding, instrumentation and electrical work) during their school day through early college programs operated in partnership with RPCC. Representative Brass stated that, as Vice Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, he wants to ensure that HBCUs are at the table when the Committee is approving capital outlay funding. He also shared that he and Dr. Reed met with the Speaker of the House and the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee to organize campus visits to see campus needs firsthand.

## LOUISIANA WORKFORCE COMMISSION

Ms. Quanda Charles provided greetings on behalf of the Secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and introduced herself as the Workforce Development Administrator, the role at the Louisiana Workforce Commission responsible for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. She reinforced that workforce and education are strongly linked and that WIOA works to align systems to support workforce development and career preparation.

Dr. Reed noted LWC is working on a comprehensive state plan to address workforce needs. They have requested input from other state agencies and Dr. Lisa Vosper is representing Regents.

Workforce Secretary Susana Schowen expressed that she has always been an enthusiastic supporter of HBCUs. She shared that Louisiana's labor force participation is low because employers are having a hard time finding skilled workers. Every month the number of job openings is significantly higher than the number of people willing to work. Secretary Schowen noted that almost 42% of the state's population is disengaged from the world of work. The Workforce Commission is attempting to reach the disengaged through Medicaid, FiTAP, SNAP, rehabilitation services, and unemployment benefits. She stated that she will continue to partner and collaborate with agencies and individuals, including Dr. Reed, to better integrate workforce systems to help Louisiana residents earn better livings.

### PEPSI

Dr. Reed acknowledged Pepsi as an HBCU Sponsor and invited Mr. Franklin Simmons, Senior Marketing Director at Pepsi, to present.

Mr. Simmons introduced his team, which included Darrell Ballard, John Houston, Jamelle Lacey, Lyiena McMillan, and Vincent Turner, many of whom are alumni of Louisiana HBCUs. Mr. Simmons indicated that he wants to bring resources to HBCU communities and briefly highlighted Pepsi's portfolio of charitable giving to HBCUs.

Mr. Ballard stated that Pepsi is a global brand with over 1,000 employees in Louisiana and a foundation partner in New Orleans that focuses on economic opportunities and minority business owners. Pepsi provides various focused professional, academic and cultural experiences for schools. Representative Brass asked how Pepsi can have a presence on Louisiana HBCU campuses. Mr. Simmons responded that any interested school could submit an RFP once their current contract with their beverage provider has ended.

### SUCCESS TRAINING INSTITUTE

Dr. Reed introduced Dr. D.L. Wallace, the founder and CEO of Success Training Institute (STI), which focuses on soft skills training and emotional intelligence development. Dr. Wallace shared the history of STI and indicated that STI donates scholarships to Title I schools for students to access soft skills training curricula/content. In honor of HBCU Day, STI provided each school with access to soft skills training through a \$350,000 award, with each institution receiving \$50,000.

### COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA ACCELERATOR PROJECT

Dr. Luria Young, Interim Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at Southern University at Baton Rouge, and Dr. Lonnie McCray, Interim Vice Chancellor of Workforce at Southern University Shreveport, provided a presentation on Complete College America Accelerator Project and

HBCU Student Success. Dr. Young stated that Complete College America is focused on building a new system that restores the promises of higher education in alignment with the work the Board of Regents does in the state.

Additionally, Dr. Young shared the goals of the Accelerator Project:

1. Engage in continuous improvement processes leading to institutional transformation.
2. Utilize critical insight regarding opportunities for institutional growth.
3. Identify and implement game changing strategies leading to improved, equitable student outcomes.

Complete College America will assist in identifying and developing partnerships between internal and external organizations and entities committed to the identified goals. She also indicated that Complete College America will provide technical support as well as assist in disseminating information gathered from institution transformational assessments.

Dr. McCray described the project timeline and explained the institutional transformation areas that seek to improve targeted institutional outcomes.

## CAMPUS UPDATES

### *Grambling State University*

Dr. Connie Walton shared that enrollment is up by 11% but stated that future enrollment is likely to be impacted by recent changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). She noted that, to date, Grambling had not yet received FAFSA applications. She is working with campus leadership to implement a plan to ensure that enrollment does not decline.

The first cohort of students has been admitted into the PhD Program for Criminology Justice and Administration for fall 2024. The BSN program had a 100% passage rate for the past two years.

Recently, the institution has purchased a mobile clinic with a grant from the Department of Health. Nursing practitioner students plan to use this facility to visit rural areas to address health disparities.

The institution plans to host a cybersecurity program for high school students and freshmen in the summer. Courtesy of a grant, there are plans to open a childcare center on campus in the fall to enroll children from infants up to four-year-olds.

Grambling was awarded a grant to address the lack of student internet access on campus. The school will purchase mobile hotspots for students and provide service for up to eight months. Additionally, the funding will allow the institution to extend cybersecurity training to non-cybersecurity students. The grant will also support infrastructure issues in the academic buildings.

### *Xavier University of Louisiana*

Mr. Ron Brade provided brief information regarding the next steps and milestones of Xavier's medical school, which is done in partnership with Ochsner. Additionally, he shared that the

institution is in the planning stages of its highly anticipated centennial celebration.

*Southern University-Baton Rouge (SUBR)*

President Shields shared that the Southern University System is currently celebrating “Founder’s Month”, marking 110 years of Southern University in Baton Rouge, and had a large celebration on March 7<sup>th</sup>. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> SUBR and SULC are jointly hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Henrietta Lacks Symposium, which aims to elevate her family's 70-year quest for justice and to illuminate the crucial intersections of health equity, fertility, medical racism, and Black maternal well-being. On April 13<sup>th</sup>, SUBR is hosting an event to address health equity issues and the campus is currently utilizing a grant from the Louisiana Department of Health to address health equity.

*Southern University Law Center (SULC)*

Chancellor Pierre shared that in May Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America and an alumna of SULC, will receive the 2024 Laetare Medal, which is the highest award given to a Catholic in America. Chancellor Pierre attended the “HBCU Fly-In”, where he was able to participate in a business roundtable with the top Fortune 500 corporations in the United States. He indicated that these corporations expressed that they want to extend opportunities to HBCUs.

*Southern University-Agriculture (SuAg)*

Chancellor Orlando McMeans shared that SuAg received two grants totaling \$11 million from the United States Forestry Services as well as an award from the Environmental Protection Agency to target social environment justice. Recently SuAg celebrated its 81<sup>st</sup> livestock show, with almost 1,500 youth participating. The Ag Center is working to establish 2+2 programs including a partnership with SUSLA. More than 30% of students are on full scholarships, with the remainder on partial scholarships. Over 150 students in the JagStar program are receiving full scholarships to work in agriculture.

*Southern University-Shreveport (SUSLA)*

Dr. Aubra Gantt shared that while SUSLA’s enrollment increased in the fall, numbers decreased in the spring. To boost recruitment, SUSLA plans to host 300 high school students on campus to expose them to the programs offered at the institution and will offer financial aid workshops. The institution plans to increase dual enrollment participation this semester and is preparing to enter into a lease with Caddo Parish Schools to expand dual enrollment offerings with local high schools.

*Southern University-New Orleans (SUNO)*

Chancellor James Ammons indicated that SUNO began accepting applications for its third cohort of nursing students. In addition, the institution is working with the selected architects to design the new nursing facility and anticipates breaking ground in the facility in winter 2024. SUNO is partnering with LCMC Health and is the first HBCU to partner for practitioner nursing workforce. SUNO also formalized an articulation agreement with Delgado Community for the Cybersecurity Degree Pathway, which is designed to train future cybersecurity practitioners to meet workforce demand in the field of information technology. SUNO is working on articulation agreements with SUSLA and Nunez Community College for cybersecurity programs as well. The institution recently opened a child development center, which will be able to accommodate 100 children ages infant through preschool.

Additionally, annual enrollment has increased by 5.6% due to growth in dual enrollment. Last year SUNO set a record for dual enrollment with 715 students enrolled; the goal for the current academic year is 1,000 students. SUNO is currently working with 18 high schools in the New Orleans area; by the fall this number should expand to 20.

#### *Dillard University*

President Rochelle Ford stated that Dillard plans to open a new living learning community in May 2025 and will unveil a strategic plan, “Transformation 2030,” aimed to advance the health, safety, and education of the Dillard community. Dillard was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to help reduce incidents of gender-based violence. Dillard serves as the host for the Super Bowl’s supplier diversity program, which seeks to help women-, minority-, and/or veteran-owned businesses become certified businesses of the Super Bowl. Additionally, Dillard was an inaugural winner of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) HBCU Clean Energy Education Prize, which seeks to help develop advanced clean energy programming opportunities and connections for HBCUs across the United States. Congressman Troy Carter also secured \$850,000 for the institution, to help with utility restoration.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Christopher Toombs identified himself as Director of External Relations at Helix Academy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and shared information on the educational options and locations for students who attend the Academy. He encouraged potential partnerships between Louisiana HBCUs and the Academy moving forward in the future.

#### CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Golden provided additional instructions to the Council regarding the schedule for the rest of the day.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**On motion of Dr. Ammons, seconded by Secretary Schowen, the meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.**