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2022 | FEBRUARY



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PROFESSIONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS CONFERENCE

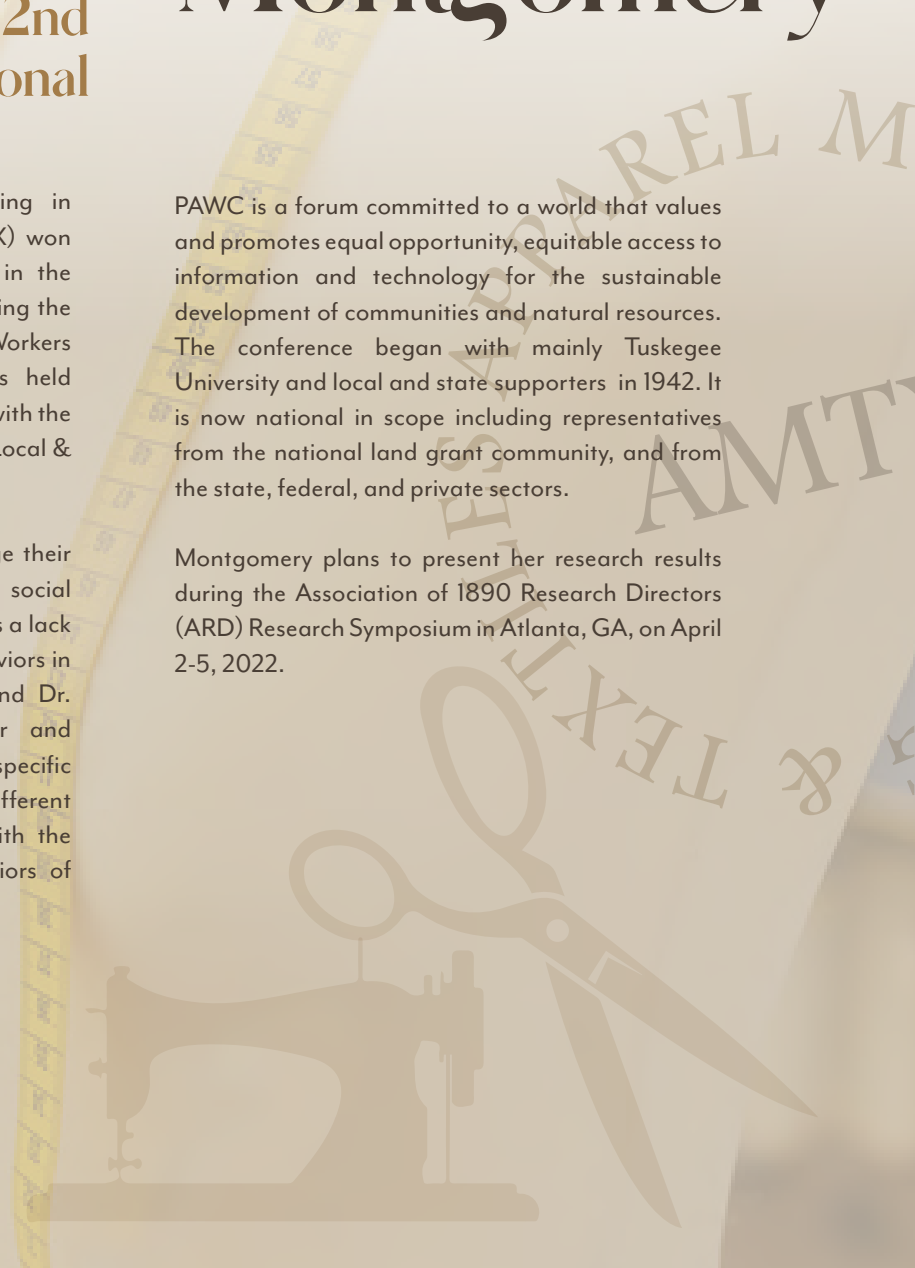
AMTX Major Wins 2nd Place during the National PAWCG Competition

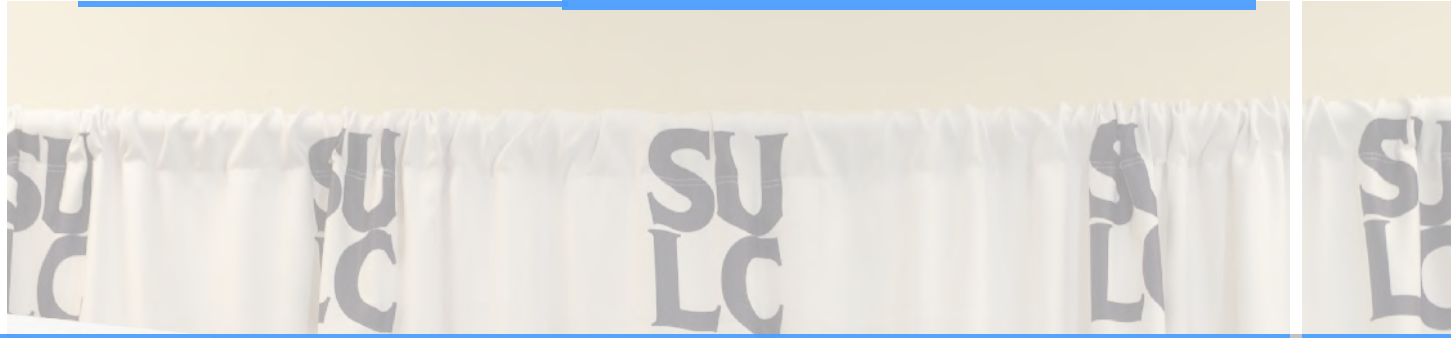
Ashley M. Montgomery, a senior majoring in Apparel Merchandising and Textiles (AMTX) won 2nd place and a cash prize of \$200.00 in the undergraduate student oral competition during the 79th Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWCG). The conference was held December 5 - 7, 2021, at Tuskegee University with the theme Forging Paths to New Opportunities: Local & Global Perspectives.

Due to COVID-19, consumers had to change their grocery shopping habits to maintain social distancing protocol. Unfortunately, there was a lack of research on online grocery shopping behaviors in the United States. Hence, Montgomery and Dr. Jung-Im Seo, AMTX associate professor and research advisor, decided to focus on the specific online grocery shopping behaviors of different generations in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with the topic of "Online Grocery Shopping Behaviors of Different Generations."

PAWCG is a forum committed to a world that values and promotes equal opportunity, equitable access to information and technology for the sustainable development of communities and natural resources. The conference began with mainly Tuskegee University and local and state supporters in 1942. It is now national in scope including representatives from the national land grant community, and from the state, federal, and private sectors.

Montgomery plans to present her research results during the Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) Research Symposium in Atlanta, GA, on April 2-5, 2022.



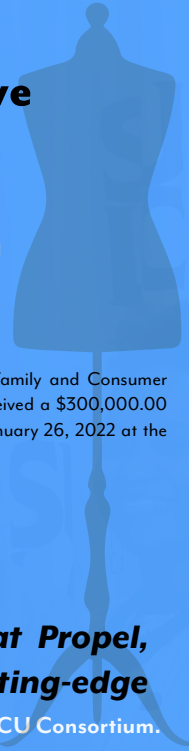


The SU Ag Center, College of Ag and Law Center receive

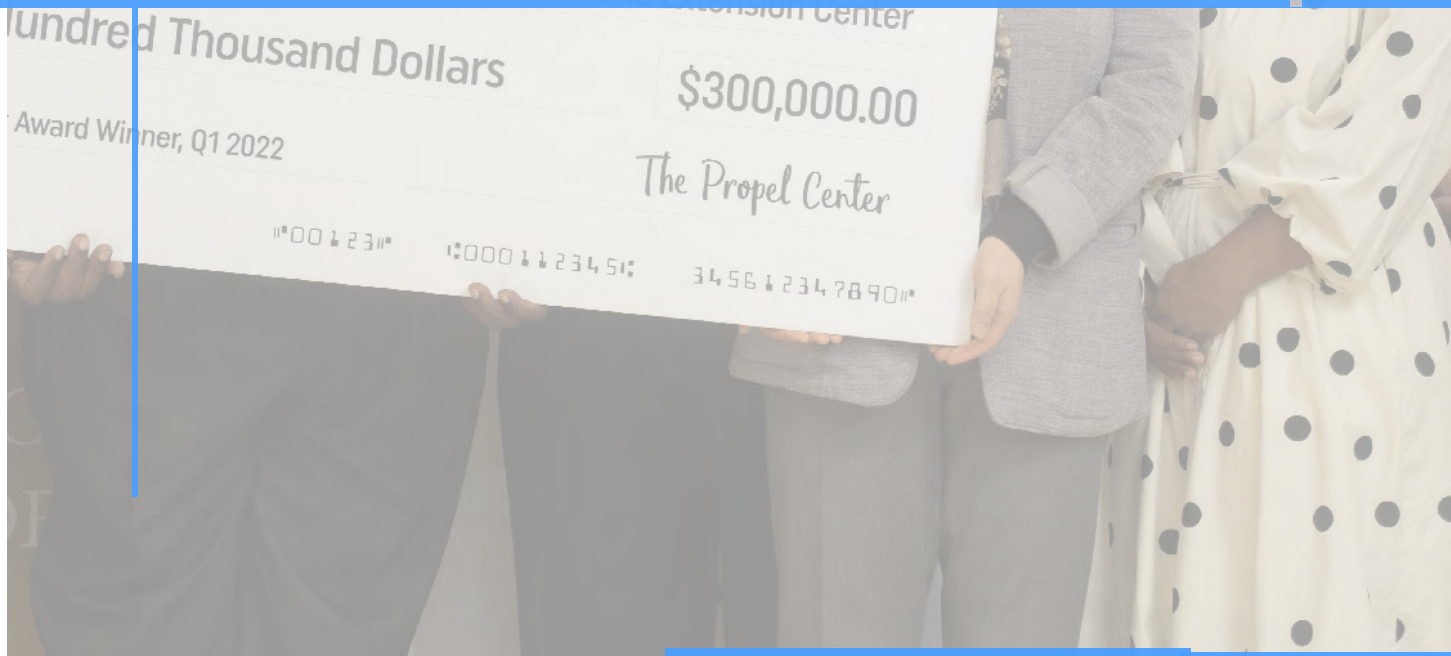
\$300,000

PROPEL
GLOBAL HBCU HEADQUARTERS FOR INNOVATION

The Southern University Ag Center, College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences (CAFCS) and the Southern University Law Center received a \$300,000.00 grant from the Propel Center during a check presentation on January 26, 2022 at the Southern University Law Center.



"Your Center represents what we do at Propel, which is supporting innovation in cutting-edge research," said Charles Gibbs, President of the Propel HBCU Consortium.





"Propel epitomizes what we are trying to do within the Southern University System, which is providing hands-on experimental learning for our students so when they go out into the workforce they are prepared to succeed," said Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Chancellor of the Southern University Ag Center and Dean of the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences.

The SU Ag Center and the CAFCS have partnered with the Southern University Law Center on this project. Drs. Seo, Samii Kennedy Benson, Assistant Professor of AMTX, and Renita Marshall, SU Ag Center Vice Chancellor for Academics and Student Support/Associate Dean of CAFCS (both co-project directors on the grant) will work along with Chelsea Grant, a Southern University Law Center student interested in fashion law.

The Southern University Ag Center, College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences (CAFCS) and the Southern University Law Center received a \$300,000.00 grant from the Propel Center during a check presentation on January 26, 2022 at the Southern University Law Center.

The proposal titled, Enhancement of Students' Design Hands-on Experiences through Computer Technological Support for the Quilt Laboratory in the Apparel Merchandising and Textiles (AMTX) Program, was one of five Historically Black Colleges and Universities selected to receive an impact grant in Agri-tech.

The grant, which includes \$200,000 in funding and \$100,000 in Apple products, will upgrade the Quilt Laboratory in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Apparel Merchandising and Textiles program by integrating state-of-the-art technologies for quilting to improve the design of quilt patterns through the use of Apple's hardware toolkit.



The project also aims to provide students with practical quilting experiences pertinent to business, design, and industrial applications including experience with home furnishing products.

"The Apple toolkit will complement the educational procedures that foster new cutting-edge computing techniques in the AMTX curriculums," said Dr. Jung-Im Seo, Southern University Associate Professor/ Program Leader of AMTX and Project Director of the grant. "The new fashion-design skills gained from using Apple products will encourage AMTX students to start their own small businesses in their Louisiana hometowns, online, or elsewhere," she added.

"The Propel grant award reflects the innovation and collaboration between the Southern University Ag Center and the Southern University Law Center," said John K. Pierre, chancellor of Southern University Law Center.

The Propel Center is a first-of-its-kind innovation and learning hub for the entire HBCU community that leverages technology to advance education equity and transform the nation's talent pipeline and workforce. Through its funding partners Apple and Southern Company, the Center has developed a robust virtual learning platform with on-campus activations at partner institutions, and a physical campus set to be constructed in Georgia's Atlanta University Center in the Spring of 2023.

To learn more, visit propelcenter.org





Southern University progresses on health and wellness through its Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life

In July 2021, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded a \$1,768,000 grant to Southern University and other 1890 partners to support the tripartite land-grant's mission of research, teaching and extension to contribute solutions to improve the health and well-being of underserved and minority populations. With this grant, the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SU Ag Center), one of the five campuses of the Southern University System in partnership with North Carolina A&T State University, Tuskegee University, other 1890 universities and the 1890 Universities Foundation, established the Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life (NHWQL).

Although the Center is housed at the Southern University campus, it serves all 19 of the the 1890 institutions and works seamlessly with the Centers' advisory board and the 1890 Universities Foundation to ensure that NHWQL advances the health and well-being of underserved and minority populations.

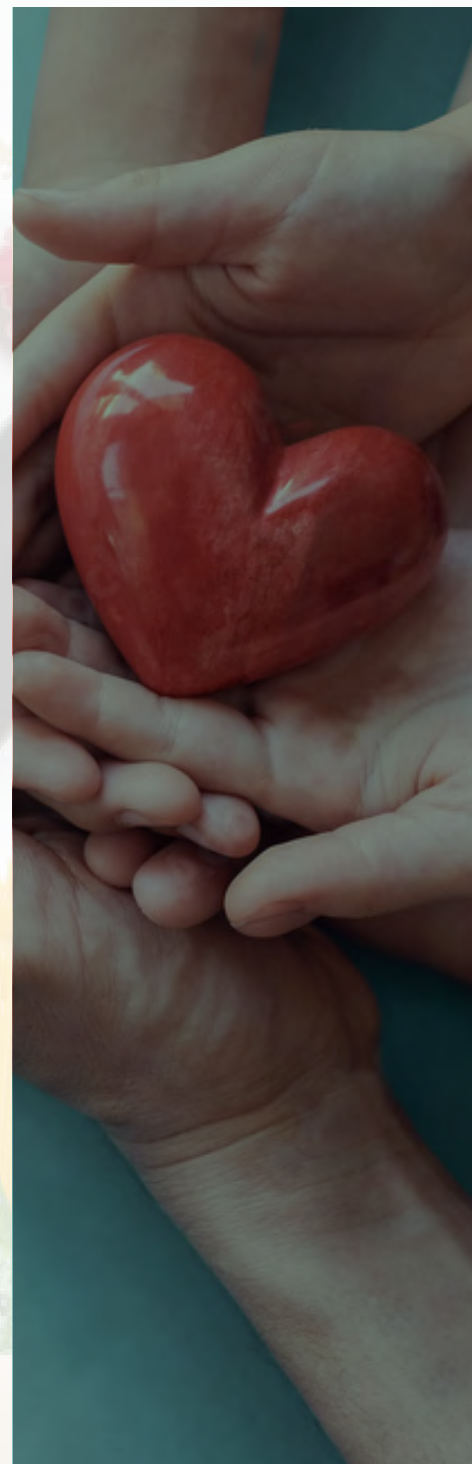
The primary goal of this Center of Excellence is to increase the capacities of 1890 institutions to address health disparities through nutrition research, teaching and extension. The Center of Excellence for NHWQL has three objectives:

RESEARCH: *To conduct innovative research in food and nutrition, health and well-being and enhance the research infrastructures and capacities of 1890 institutions to address health disparities through nutrition research.*

TEACHING: *To expose students to the best educational and leadership opportunities in nutrition, health, wellness and quality of life, which can prepare them as the ambassadors of the underserved communities to combat health disparities.*

EXTENSION: *To provide innovative nutrition education and training that leads to healthy, positive changes, increases in knowledge, skills, attitude and changes of behaviors necessary for choosing nutritionally sound diets and a healthy lifestyle.*

Each partner has a leading role in accomplishing the Center's objectives. The SU Ag Center and Tuskegee University will lead the Extension components. The "Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better" curriculum and raised bed gardening will be the two Extension programs used. North Carolina A&T State University will lead the Center's research component by building metabolomics capacity and establishing methods to conduct targeted and non-targeted metabolomics research. All three institutions will be involved in the teaching component and work closely with students through scholar's programs and symposium series. Students will also be involved in research and Extension activities.





NHWQL received additional funding from the 1890 Foundation and USDA-NIFA

The Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life (NHWQL) was awarded \$500,000 from the 1890 Universities Foundation. This funding is made possible through a grant from Walmart's Center for Racial Equity.

"The 1890 Universities Foundation is pleased to provide supplemental funding to support the important work of the Center for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life which is the newest center in the 1890 Centers of Excellence program. This funding is made possible through the 1890 Foundation's partnership with Walmart and is an example of the Foundation's mission to assist the 1890 Universities by leveraging partnerships to fund innovative solutions to address compelling economic, social, health, environmental and technological challenges facing our communities," said Dr. Mort Neufville, President and CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation.

"The Southern University Ag Center is appreciative to the Walmart Foundation who recognized that the Southern University Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life was worthy of investing in, as it aligns with our mutual goals around improving the quality of life for the citizens we collectively serve," said Dr. Orlando F. McMeans, Chancellor-Dean of the SU Ag Center and the College of Ag. "I am also appreciative to USDA-NIFA for awarding Southern this Center of Excellence designation and its initial funding. And lastly, thanks to the 1890 Foundation and its leadership for seeking partnerships that will advance the missions of these Centers," expressed Dr. McMeans.

Walmart announced the grant in a press release stating that the funds will build staff capacity to prepare students for careers in fields such as agriculture, healthcare, and technology via the 1890 Universities Foundation's four Centers of Excellence across its 19 institutions.

"We are very grateful to Walmart for providing us with this grant through our 1890 Universities Foundation," said Dr. Fatemeh Malekian, Project Director for NHWQL and Director of the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Wellness at the SU Ag Center. "This funding will assist the team (consisting of the SU Ag Center, North Carolina A&T State University, Tuskegee University, and the 1890 Universities Foundation) in increasing the capacity of the Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life, in supporting the tripartite land-grant's mission of research, teaching and extension and contributing solutions to improve the health and well-being of underserved and minority populations," added Dr. Malekian.

In addition to the funding from the 1890 Universities Foundation, the USDA-NIFA awarded the SU Ag Center an additional \$1,680,000 in December 2021 to enable the Center to continue its work for a second year.

The 1890 Universities Foundation was established in December 2016 and supports the core mission of education, outreach, and academics across the nineteen 1890 land grant universities in the United States. These universities, called Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) were established through the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890. For additional information about the <https://www.1890foundation.org/about-us-2>.

For additional information about the Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life, visit <https://www.suagcenter.com/page/center-of-excellence>, contact Dr. Fatemeh Malekian at fatemeh_malekian@suagcenter.com, or Dr. Renita Marshall, Co-Project Director for NHWQL and SU Ag Center Vice-Chancellor for Academic and Student Services/ Associate Dean of the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences at renita_marshall@suagcenter.com.

Information for this article appeared in the Oct. 2021 Association of 1890 Research Directors Newsletter, ARD Updates.

Diversity & Inclusion

Southern University and LSU Ag Centers hold Workshop on Racial Understanding

Cooperative Extension employees from the Southern University and Louisiana State University (LSU) Ag Centers volunteered to attend the two-day Coming Together for Racial Understanding (CTRU) workshop on December 9-10, 2021.

The training team consisted of two SU and two LSU facilitators with staff from both centers participating in open dialogue, active listening opportunities on inclusiveness, and group exercises.

“We were excited to embark upon this joint training opportunity,” said Dr. Tiffany Franklin, SU Ag Center facilitator. “In this valuable work lies an opportunity to both learn from and educate others through civilized dialogue. These dialogues will break down barriers and construct positive change in mindsets and behaviors amongst diverse audiences. Our team’s Coming Together for Racial Understanding sessions provide knowledge and resources to assist with facilitating “hard” conversations around the multi-faceted areas of diversity and inclusion. The knowledge gained will aid our field staff with providing more diverse Extension programming to everyone across the state. Together, we will expand our reach, one conversation at a time.,” expressed Dr. Franklin

Monica Guient, LSU AgCenter assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion, said Coming Together for Racial Understanding is a national initiative that started through the Southern Rural Development Center. It is meant to support extension agents working together to discuss race and diversity so that both LSU and Southern can fully support their clientele throughout the state.

“The conversations and dialogues center on our own space and culture and how it may be different or similar to others,” she said.

Donovan L. Segura, SU Ag Center Associate Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Title IX, said these types of conversations are critically important to show that there is a general understanding of the issues we face within our communities.

“Race is not so comfortable for all to freely talk about. It’s a sticky conversation,” Segura said. “But we understand that institutional racism exists, and it affects many people. It actually affects generations.”

In the future, Segura hopes to see these joint workshops grow to different regions across the state, although he acknowledged it is crucial to reach out to members of the community who may not be as proactive as the employees who volunteered to attend the event.

Additional training will be held with the SU and LSU staff throughout the 2022 year.



Tiffany
FRANKLIN

Dr. Tiffany Franklin was named to the City of Baton Rouge/ East Baton Rouge Parish Head Start Policy Council.

“I am delighted to serve in this capacity to help inform policies related to how our kids in East Baton Rouge parish Head Start programs are served. Having a passion for working with youth, I am especially excited to have the opportunity to interact directly with the parents of the children.

In this role, Franklin will serve as a community member to inform policies and procedures related to the Head Start Program.

The East Baton Rouge Head Start Program provides children with education, leadership and advocacy. It promotes school readiness for children ages three to five with a pre-school curriculum assisting them in enhancing their cognitive, language, literacy, social, and emotional development.



2022

Emerging Scholar

Dr. De'Etra Jenra

YOUNG



Article from
Diverse
ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION



According to the National Science Foundation (NSF), geosciences have the lowest ethnic and racial diversity rates of any STEM discipline, but Dr. De'Etra Jenra Young is working to make sure it doesn't stay that way.

Associate dean of academics and land-grant programs and associate professor in the College of Agriculture at Tennessee State University (TSU), Young knows just how powerful historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are when it comes to retaining underrepresented students in the sciences. Not only does she teach at one, she's a proud first-generation alumna of Louisiana's Southern University and A&M College.

Yet Young also knows that — when it comes to earth sciences — HBCUs might not offer the extensive list of courses that can be necessary for employment or advanced degrees in geoscience, she says. So, Young took action. She partnered with Vanderbilt

University, less than three miles down the road from TSU, to develop the Earth Horizons program. The NSF-funded program provides a variety of experiential and classroom experiences within the geosciences.

"It brings together the strengths of both institutions," says Young. "What we're trying to do is just make the field more inclusive. [It's about] making students more comfortable and more aware about the opportunities in the natural sciences."

For example, knowing that her students from urban areas may have little experience outdoors, she created a three-week field course to help students become more comfortable camping and working in the field.

But Earth Horizons is just one of the many ways Young is increasing access to the earth sciences. Among other initiatives,

she also oversees the Dean's Scholars Program, a mentoring and financial assistance program that provides paid research experiences for students in the College of Agriculture.

"We know that students are often working off campus to help with paying tuition or just to support their livelihood, so we created the Dean's Scholars Program to provide an opportunity for our students to get paid [for] undergraduate research experience here on campus, so they don't have to find off-campus jobs."

Under Young's guidance, all of the students within the program have been completing at least three internships and graduating within four years. Whether working with dean's scholars or as project director for the 1890 Environmental Justice Academy — yet another program to broaden minority participation in the natural sciences — Young has established herself as a devoted mentor to students. In 2018, she was named the National Adviser of the Year by the national student organization Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences.

"I spend a lot of time with students going through career goals, navigating issues, helping them find resources. We spend a lot of time working with students, just to make sure that once we recruit them and they come to school here, we retain them," says Young, who calls mentoring "the exciting part" of her job.

"She is a natural teacher, a lifelong learner, and a solid and compassionate leader who inspires others to chase after their academic and professional dreams," writes Dr. Chandra Reddy, dean and director of research at TSU, in his nomination letter. "Dr. Young is the go-to faculty member for students in the college and faculty colleagues admire her dedication and seek her guidance in mentoring students."



On top of it all, Young has secured over \$4 million in external grant funds as principal and co-principal investigator and is closely engaged with the community outside of TSU, too. She has served for the education committee of a local nonprofit, Urban Green Lab; she has developed a sustainability curriculum for K-12 students within Metro Nashville Public Schools; and she has been implementing urban greening programs within Nashville by planting trees in lower income neighborhoods — work that she calls "tree equity."

"I'm looking at how we grow the number of trees that we need in our communities that may not have a tree canopy," explains Young. "So when you think of the benefits of trees — fresh air, flood reduction, cooling neighborhoods and [alleviating] heat-related illnesses, even utility costs — we want that in all communities and not just certain communities."

Her civic-minded efforts have earned her national recognition from the Sierra Club and Women's Earth Alliance as well as The Nature Conservancy's Climate Equity Innovation Lab for environmental leaders. She also earned Nashville's Emerging Leader Award for education in 2018.

But, despite her many accolades, Young tends to spend more time talking about the generosity and help of her own mentors, sharing their names as though they were guideposts mapping out her educational journey.

"I've had some pretty incredible mentors," she says. "They have been very instrumental to my success, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention that."

This story appeared in the January 20, 2022 edition of *Diverse Issues In Higher Education* magazine and was written by Jessica Ruf. Dr. Young earned a B.S. degree in Urban Forestry from Southern University and a M.S. and Ph.D., both from Texas A&M University.



(c.1948 - Early extension work during the 1940s, Image provided by the SU John B. Cade Library Archives)

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