

# Chancellor's Report



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# SUSLA CELEBRATES 53RD MISS SUSLA AT CORONATION



## MISS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT SHREVEPORT 2020-2021

# Raylon La'Jai Scott

Miss Southern University at Shreveport, Raylon La'Jai Scott, is a 19-year-old native of Keithville, LA. She is the daughter of Shenay Boone and Roderick Scott and the granddaughter of Elizabeth Hudson. She has one older brother, La'Roderick Scott, who is also a player for the Southern University Jags Football team.

As a 2019 Graduate of Southwood High School, Raylon demonstrated her leadership skills and versatility. She was a member of the Cowboy Battalion and Leading Lady of the Silver Spurs Dance Team. She graduated as an honor student with a 3.8 GPA.

Raylon began her matriculation at Southern University at Shreveport in Fall 2019, majoring in Criminal Justice. Raylon firmly believes in helping others and encouraging them to fulfill their dreams and aspirations. As a freshman, Raylon demonstrated her leadership qualities and dedication to all aspects of collegiate life at SUSLA. Raylon's passion for dance motivated her to join the SUSLA Jazzy Jags Dance Team in her freshman year. She's also active in several university organizations, such as Student Government Association, Student Support Services, and the Student Center Board.

It is her dedication to her curricula and extra-curricular activities that have marked Raylon's success at SUSLA. She has a 3.5 GPA. Upon graduating from Southern University at Shreveport with a degree in criminal justice, she plans to attend Southern University at Baton Rouge to get her Bachelors of Science degree. She is also interested in attending Southern University Law Center. Raylon intends to enlist in the Navy and become an officer.

Although Raylon is a full-time student with many commitments, she still finds time to manage a full-time job and her role as a peer mentor on SUSLA's campus. During her leisure time, she enjoys relaxing, spending time with her friends, and reading the bible.

Raylon is a member of Word of God Ministries. She is a firm believer in God. She believes that she would not have accomplished these things and become the person she is today without Him. Her belief is grounded in a quote by Hanna Joy, "I am the daughter of a king who is not moved by the world for my God is with me and goes before me. I do not fear because I am His."



## SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT SHREVEPORT

# 2020-2021 Royal Court



### *Miss Sophomore Jennifer M. Pickens*

Miss Sophomore Jennifer M. Pickens hails from Mena, Arkansas. She is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Pickens. Jennifer is a sophomore transfer student majoring in Medical Laboratory Technician and serves as the 2020-2021 Secretary of the Student Government Association. Along with pursuing her associate degree, she is also studying to receive her certification in phlebotomy.

Jennifer is a 2015 graduate of Captain Shreve High School, where she graduated with a 3.5 GPA. While at Captain Shreve, she was crowned Homecoming Queen and was a member of the Lady Gators track team. She also was a participant as a Delta Debutante.

Before attending Southern University at Shreveport, she received her Bachelor's degree in Biology from Grambling State University. Jennifer served as a member of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers, Women Empowerment Group, and the Center for Mathematical Achievement in Science and Technology Organization, along with being a dual-sport athlete. She is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. While maintaining a 3.7 GPA in the classroom, Jennifer is also very active in her community through her mom's nonprofit organization, Helping Hurting People.

Jennifer lives by the scripture Proverbs 31:25, which says, "She is clothed in strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future." She looks forward to serving the students here at Southern University at Shreveport.



### *Miss Freshman Kerriuna Curry*

Miss Freshman, the beautiful Kerriuna Curry, is a 23-year-old freshman majoring in Radiology from Gibsland, LA. She is the daughter of Shelby Bias. She has six siblings, whom she loves and adores.

Kerriuna is a 2016 Kaiser High School in Germany. While at Kaiser, she was in the national honor society, K-Town Raiders Marching, and Lady Raiders Basketball Team. Kerriuna is a former member of the United States Army with the rank of Specialist.

Kerriuna is involved in the Student Government Association, Student Support Services, the Jags Cheer Team at Southern University at Shreveport. She also has a strong passion for fitness and community service.

After graduating from SUSLA, Kerriuna plans to obtain her bachelor's degree from Southern University A&M. In her spare time, she enjoys dancing, cheering, fellowshiping with family and friends. Her hobbies include shopping, doing hair, and helping her peers boost their self-esteem.

Kerriuna lives by the scripture Proverbs 31:30, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is vain; but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised."



## *SGA President Tobias Gardner*

Tobias Gardner is a native of Shreveport, LA. He is the son of the Rev. Charles and Janice Gardner. Tobias is a sophomore majoring in Nursing, and he currently serves as the 53rd Student Government Association President.

While attending Southern University at Shreveport, he has served as the Chief of Staff for the 2019-2020 SGA President. Tobias is a part of the Williams Center, Student Support Services, and the Jags Marching Band. Tobias enjoys playing instruments at church, cooking heavy meals, and watching the Dallas Cowboys win.

Tobias loves helping others and taking care of his fellow students. As SGA President, his motto is, "We get things done when we work as one."



## *Freshman President Ja'Quan Davie*

Ja'Quan Davie is an 18-year-old 2020 graduate from Captain Shreve High School. He is the son of Jamella Perkins. JaQuan moved around a lot from Louisiana and Texas but has now found himself a home in Shreveport and at Southern University at Shreveport. He is currently serving as the Freshman Class President and is a Business Management major.

JaQuan is a member of the Williams Center Program, Student Support Services, and the Student Government Association. He is also a Resident Assistance in the Jaguar Courtyard. JaQuan is motivated most is his love for his siblings and mother. Ja'Quan's love for them runs so deep, and he will go as far as he needs to bless them.

Ja'Quan is a very goal-driven young man. He works extremely hard to make his vision come to reality. The book in the bible that gives Ja'Quan the most insight is the book of Job. Ja'Quan's faith in his God despite all the adversity he may face in life. He lives by the scripture Isaiah 54:17, "No weapon formed against me shall prosper."



## *Freshman Vice President Ja'kemeon Jack*

Ja'kemeon Jack is an 18-year-old freshman from Bossier City, LA majoring in Emergency Medical Technician. He is the son of Kimberly Jack-Sellers and Carlos Washington. Ja'Kemeon is a 2020 graduate of Bossier High School, where he participated on the basketball team.

While attending Southern University in Shreveport, he is currently serving as the Freshman Class Vice President for the 2020-2021 school year. Not only is he active in school, but he is involved in the community as well. He has participated with the Salvation Army, Boys & Girls Club, and organized a Christmas toy drive. Ja'kemeon was a three-year member of the Bossier City Kappa League, a leadership organization to prepare young men to become

the next great leaders. His favorite scripture is John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." After graduation from SUSLA, he plans to become a paramedic with Shreveport. His favorite quote is by Will Smith, "The road to success is commitment."

## VETERANS UPWARD BOUND HONORS VETERANS FOR THEIR VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION



On Wednesday, November 11, Southern University at Shreveport honored those who have served our country at its annual Veterans Day Celebration. The event was hosted by the Veterans Upward Bound Office where Ms. Urina Holt is the Director. For the purpose of social distancing and implementation of COVID-19 safety protocols, the event was held on the parking lot of SUSLA's main campus. Special guests included Brittney A. Greene, Chief of Domestic Violence for the Caddo Parish D.A.'s Office. Chief Greene is also a U.S. Marines Veteran. The event was well attended by veterans from among the University's staff, the public sector, as well as faculty and staff. To-go lunches were provided to all Veterans.

*#ComeBeSouthern*

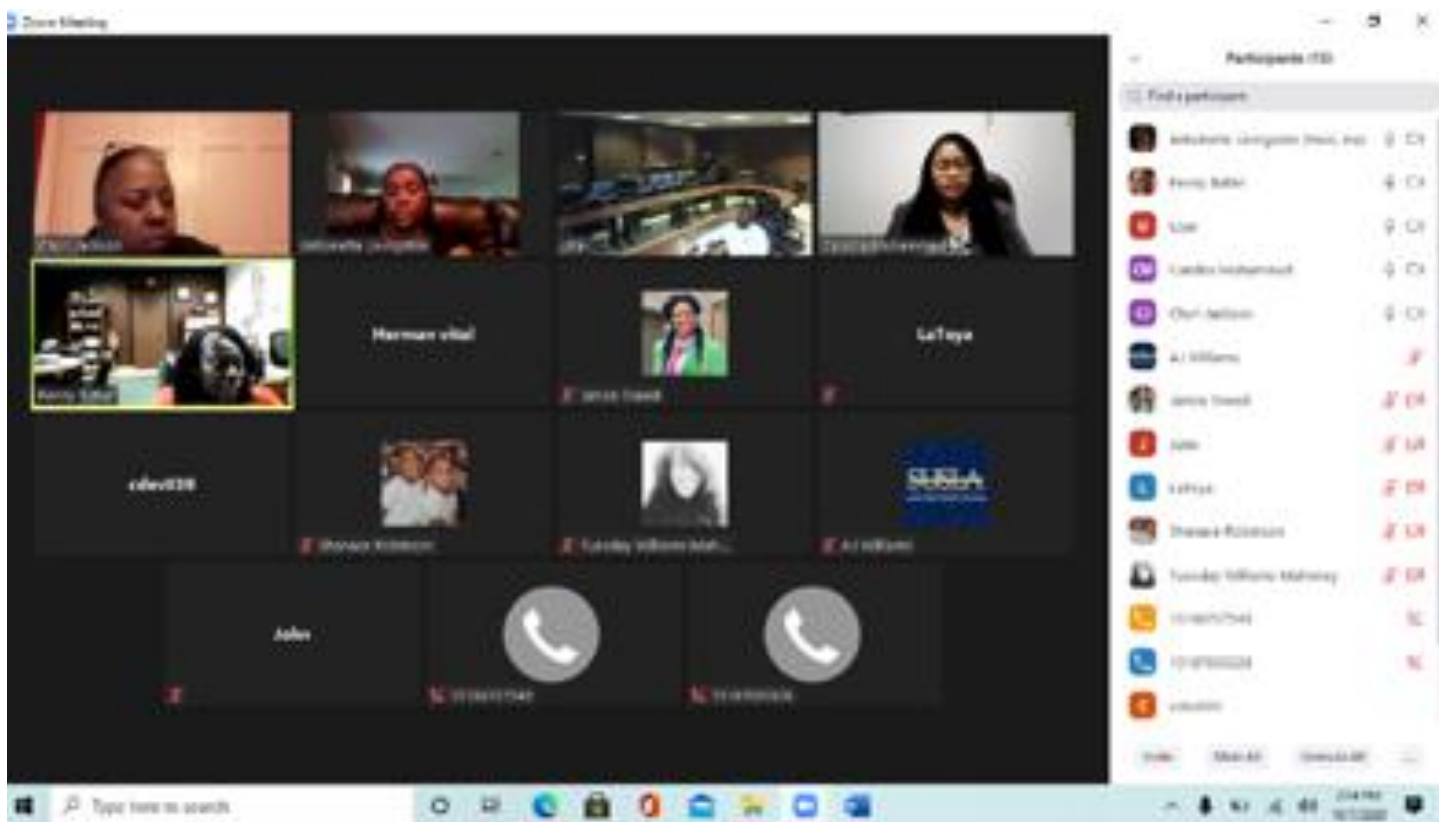
## DR. MELVA WILLIAMS HONORED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON FOUNDATION



Dr. Melva Williams, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Southern University Shreveport and Southern University New Orleans, was honored on Thursday, November 19, 2020 by former U.S. President Bill Clinton's foundation for her commitment to preparing transformational leaders in higher education at the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Clinton Foundation's annual benefit was held virtually.

Williams, a member of the Presidential Leadership Scholars community, was featured as an "Everyday Hero" in the Clinton Foundation community for her extraordinary work and contributions on pressing challenges facing our nation and our world. The Foundation shined a light on her passion in transformative efforts to cultivate leaders in higher education and educate emerging leaders with the soft skills training needed to thrive in the 21st century.

## CADDO AMERICAN JOB CENTER'S PARTNER ROUNDTABLE FOCUSES ON STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING SUSLA/WIOA YOUTH PARTNERSHIP



On October 7, 2020, Caddo American Job Center hosted the Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA)/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth /Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Partner Roundtable. During this meeting, several employees from SUSLA and the City of Shreveport discussed current partnerships, partnership opportunities, funding streams and most importantly, WIOA Youth and the Eligible Training Provider List. The providers included on the ETPL offer occupational skills training programs that have been authorized by the State or local authority to receive WIOA funding through Individual Training Accounts (ITA's). The ETPL also enables American Job Center workforce specialists to assist customers in selecting training programs that were designed to help prepare them to obtain a job by equipping them with the skills that are required by local employers in a high demand field.

Penny Butler, Management Assistant, WIOA Youth, indicated that “the existing partnership between SUSLA and the City of Shreveport’s WIOA Youth participants can be strengthened by ensuring that we direct students -especially youth- to programs that are included on the ETPL.”

“It is a requirement” she continues “that the programs on the ETPL are high demand occupations where participants will be able to earn wages that can sustain them and their families”. Shanace Robinson, Southern University at Shreveport’s Director of Community Engagement and Initiatives, who has three programs including NCCR Core Construction, Power Line Worker, and Structural Welding-on the ETPL list concurs with Butler. According to Robinson, it was important to get her newly offered programs included on the ETPL because “programs included on the ETPL have been rigorously reviewed and must maintain a high level of quality to remain on the list. This, to me, is built in assurance to students that they will obtain the skills necessary to be successful upon completion of their program”.

SUSLA currently has approximately twenty programs listed on the ETPL including Airframe/PowerPlant Maintenance, Computer Science, Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, and Human Services. A comprehensive list of eligible training providers can be found at [www.laworks.org](http://www.laworks.org).



## CADDO AMERICAN JOB CENTER'S PARTNERS FEATURED AT LIBBY GLASS JOB FAIR & CAREER EXPO



On November 18-19, 2020, Caddo American Job Center's partners were invited by Steve Posey, Rapid Response Coordinator Region 7 for Louisiana Workforce Commission, to participate in the Libby Glass Job Fair & Career Expo which was sponsored by Rapid Response and held at Libby Glass. SUSLA's Assistant Director of Admissions and Recruitment, Derolyk Fuller, participated in the event. When asked about the event, whose setup took COVID-19 protocols into consideration, Fuller stated that "The turnout today was greater than I expected". With many employees, prospective students for Southern University at Shreveport, visiting Admissions and Recruitment's table and filling out inquiry cards, Fuller "was surprised to see that so many [employees] were interested in furthering their education although they are facing their last month of employment."

The Libby Glass Job Fair & Career Expo was organized as a rapid response to the pending closure of the Libby Glass factory and outlet store, both located in Shreveport, LA. In a WARN notice filed August 26, 2020, Libby Glass published notification that on October 25, the company would officially layoff its 420 employees. Fuller's presence at the event had one significant feature. Laid off or dislocated workers are immediately considered for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult & Dislocated Worker funding, which provides financial assistance for enrollment in academic programs or short-term training programs. Fuller's experience, however, had more intrinsic value. "It was a very humbling, yet exciting, experience" he stated, "I was very glad to provide information that provided hope for most who attended."

# CAREER SERVICES PROVIDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES TO CADDO PARISH STUDENTS

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Beginning in the spring semester of 2021, Southern University at Shreveport's (SUSLA) Office of Career Services will provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) training to students enrolled in Caddo Parish schools who have disabilities recognized by the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services Office (LRS). SUSLA will be working with students currently enrolled at Green Oaks, Huntington, Booker T Washington, Continuing Education for Life Training (CELT), and Northwood. OCS will work with the schools and community partners to facilitate transition planning, knowledge acquisition, increased decision-making skills. Topics covered through Pre-ETS include career exploration, work-based learning experiences, exploration of education and training programs for after high school, workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills, and self-advocacy.

**OPPORTUNITY STARTS HERE.**

## CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER STEPHANIE ROGERS REPRESENTS SUSLA IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PANEL

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In November, the North Louisiana Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals explored the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion and how to make our organizations stronger. Panelists included: Stephanie Rogers, Southern University at Shreveport; Rachel Scott, YWCA of Northwest Louisiana; and Von Jennings, Goodwill Industries of North Louisiana.

## SUSLA STUDENT ATTRIBUTES SUCCESS TO CAREER SERVICES: JOB OUTLOOK SEMINAR

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Prior to moving back to Shreveport, where she was raised, La'Dereka McCray was living in Sacramento, California working as a hairstylist. Upon her return to Shreveport, she decided to pursue a new career path knowing that she wanted to create a life for her and her child that would provide stability and a consistent income. Once enrolled at SUSLA, McCray felt slightly out of place due to being older than most of the students she saw on campus. "Honestly," she recalled, "I felt out of place. Most of the students in my classes were fresh out of high school so I felt like the 'old student' on campus". After passing her Science courses, however, McCray felt a boost in her confidence and made the decision to apply to the Nursing program. While in the program McCray was inducted into the National Honor Society, an accomplishment she is very proud of.



During September 2020, the Office of Career Services (OCS) hosted a Job Outlook Seminar Series that focused on a different topic each week. McCray attended all four sessions and stated, "I was provided all the tools, resources and soft skills needed to get the job I wanted". McCray believes attending SUSLA was a great steppingstone in her academic journey. Currently employed at Baylor Scott & White Health, McCray's next steps are pursuing a Bachelor of Science in nursing, joining the SUSLA Alumni Association, and donating to the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

**COME BE SOUTHERN.**

## STUDENT SUCCESS STORY: GABRIELLE NICOLE LATSON

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“I have always been an ambitious person,” said Youth Network Initiatives (YNI) alumnae Gabrielle Nicole Latson. “I wanted to do something different with my life, to achieve something meaningful, and to be somebody special.” For this mother of two, that meant three things: successfully completing her high school equivalency test (HiSET), becoming a licensed practical nurse and, one day, owning a boutique.

While Latson is well on her way to achieving her goals, her journey has been a complicated one. The first obstacle Latson faced was pregnancy. Due to complications and the responsibilities of being a single mother, she took a break from school. “Life has its way of throwing curve balls at you,” reflected Latson. Life seemed to have other plans for Latson. The more time passed, the more her dreams began to fade.

While things were difficult, Latson knew she had to find a way to finish school. Latson truly believed that getting an education would stack the deck in her favor. After doing some research, she discovered and enrolled in Southern University at Shreveport’s Youth Network Initiative program. With the help of Latoya Hemphill, Coordinator of Adult Education/YNI Case Manager and Deborah Jacques, Head Adult Education Faculty, Latson began to flourish. “Joining YNI was the blessing I needed to help me reach my goals, however, life has a way of throwing curve balls at you,” she stated. Pregnant with her second child, Latson kept pushing. Latson’s determination and YNI’s support enabled her to successfully complete all five components of the HiSET.

Latson’s advice to others who are on a similar path as she was is encouraging. “If you want an opportunity to get the training and personal attention you need to get back on track, join YNI. It is one of the best kept secrets in Shreveport.” Reflecting on her journey, Latson continued, “Having children looking up to me made me refuse to let challenges distract me, discourage me, or stop me. The sky is the limit.” Currently, Latson is in the process of enrolling in a licensed practical nursing (LPN) program. She is also busy raising her family and managing her new online clothing boutique.

The Youth Network Initiative (YNI) Program is a collaboration between the City of Shreveport’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Southern University of Shreveport. YNI provides services to out-of-school youth who are between the ages of 16 and 24 and who reside in Shreveport, LA. For more information, please contact Dr. Chyrl M. Jackson, Employment Coordinator/Job Developer, at [cmjackson@susla.edu](mailto:cmjackson@susla.edu).





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Office of the Chancellor  
Rodney A. Ellis, Ed.D., Chancellor

#### Contributing Editors

Leslie R. McClellon, Ed.D., Chief of Staff & Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives  
Linzola Winzer, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor  
**OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR**

Angelique Feaster Evans, SUMAS Coordinator  
Yvette Allen, Advancement Assistant & Alumni Ambassador

Articles provided through various campus units and  
the Office of Marketing & University Relations  
Rasheeda Simmons, Director of Marketing

Design & layout provided through the  
Office of Graphic Services & Document Management Center  
Dellanee Wade, Graphic Services & Multimedia Coordinator

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318.670.9201. Section 504 Coordinator:

Jerushka Ellis, Health & Physical Education Complex, Room 314, 318.670.9367.



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