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For Today's Black College Students

Volume XXI

Number 5

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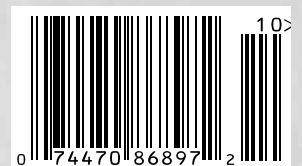
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Thomas Williams Is An Old School Swimmer Who Is Teaching The Next Generation How To Swim.

By Dr. James B. Ewers Jr.



If you are an old school man or woman, there were certain things that you did during the summer.

All of us slept late at least for the first week of our summer vacation. That was fun but it got old quick.

Our parents and love providers ensured that we left the house. We had breakfast, maybe a late one and off we went to conquer the day.

Some of us showed up for lunch. Most of us only came back for dinner. We were having way too much fun to come in eat. Lunch usually consisted of something out of a snack machine.

If you are Black like me, you probably lived near a recreation center. There you had multiple activities. If you named the sport or activity, it was there for us.

Swimming was a sport and an activity. You could be serious about it or just have fun.

Thomas Williams started swimming in middle school in his hometown of

Ecorse, Michigan, just a stone's throw away from Detroit.

He made the Ecorse High School swim team, and his favorite event was the breaststroke.

He said, "I began swimming in a wading pool and eventually in a pool." He added, "My first time in the deep end, my coach had to use the hook to pull me out."

Mr. Williams never forgot that experience during his first year in high school.

As fate would have it, his high school hired a swim coach with ties to Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Divine intervention brought Thomas Williams and Coach Mathis Epps together.

You see, Thomas Williams had never heard of Southern University. Growing up in Ecorse, Michigan made him unaware of Black colleges.

However, miracles happen when you least expect them. In his neighborhood lived some folks from Louisiana and they told Thomas Williams more about Southern University.

That was a defining moment in his life as after graduating from high school, Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana became a part of his future.

He said, "I went to Southern University sight unseen. It was my first time on their campus and in the South."

The times and conditions were different. Integration and segregation were happening simultaneously in many parts of the region.

There were some places you could go in the front door and there were some places that you had to use the back door.

That was a part of the old school experience. Back in the day, Black colleges (schools) were not called HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). They were simply called Black colleges or Black schools.

Williams said, "I never thought swimming competitively would be a part of my college experience."

He received family support and a swimming work-study grant that paid for his freshman year at Southern University.

What happened next in the life of Thomas Williams is almost unbelievable, but this is where hard work intersected with opportunity.

Southern university cut swimming out as a sport. Those on the team were facing financial challenges except for Thomas Williams and two of his first-year teammates.

Charles Thompson, the swim coach at Southern University was offered the same position at Dillard University in New Orleans Louisiana.

He took Thomas Williams and his mates with him to Dillard University

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DILLARD UNIVERSITY



where they were stellar members of the swim team for three years.

Thomas Williams is an esteemed graduate of Dillard University, class of 1973.

He has passed on his superior aquatic talents to his son, Thomas Jr. and daughters, Trina and Miesha. They know how to swim because of him. His wife, Sheila has assisted in this family venture.

Now, Thomas Williams is teaching his grandchildren this sport for a lifetime. They are being taught by a swimming champion.

Thomas Williams can look back proudly at a collegiate swimming career that took him from Ecorse, Michigan to being on course to Southern University and to Dillard University.

He had role models in his swimming career and now he is being one for others to emulate.



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There's no question that Hollywood has a type. You'd be crazy to argue that fame is blind like Lady Justice. However every now and then someone comes along who shatters the idea of what it means to be a star. For example, there aren't many super famous flutists wreaking the internet. There's, also very few plus sized sex symbols going viral on social media. All of this is what makes Lizzo a unicorn in the world of entertainment.

Yet, being a unicorn isn't always as fanciful as it might seem. For all she has accomplished, Lizzo still has to deal with body shaming, and negative comments about her appearance on a level that few ever have, but it's the way she handles these slings and arrows that have garnered her a loyal fan base.

"When you love yourself, anything becomes possible. I am confident in who I am," she said.

Many conversations about Lizzo begin and sometimes end with discussions of her curvaceous figure, but that is a mistake because she is quite possibly one of the most talented artists and musicians to come along in a very long time. Her vocal range places her in the category of women who be "singing". That fact that she is an actual musician who plays an instrument places her in the peer group of women like Alicia Keys or mega stars like Prince. The confidence that comes with those realizations is what has been propelling her from a burgeon-

ing singer songwriter plying her trade in Prince's home of Minneapolis to a super star.

"For the past few years, I have really been working on myself and learning to love who I am. What you see now is a more confident Lizzo who believes in her confidence," she shared.

It may seem like Lizzo suddenly appeared on the scene but her journey into music began when she was just ten years old. That's when she began learning the flute under renowned music teacher Claudia Momen. She studied classical flute all the way up through college where she attended the University of Houston. Then at the age of 21 and after her father's death, she decided to make a push to get into and thrive in the music industry. She moved to Minneapolis and the singer-songwriter-flutist let the world know she could rap and that she could rap really really well.

"At times joyfully nonsensical, Lizzo's stream-of-consciousness rhymes can also be lethally pointed," said Killian Fox of the Guardian after he reviewed her 2013 album *LizzoBangers*.

From that point on, her trajectory was skyward. She began to tour the world. *LizzoBangers* was rereleased by Virgin Records, and she began to earn recognition from the industry, the media, and one important person in particular. Prince himself chose to work with Lizzo on his album *Plectrum*,

a joint album with the group *3rdEyeGirl*.

"It was surreal, like a fairy tale. It's something that I will never get over," she said of working with the Purple One himself.

It should be clear now that Lizzo is more than a flash in the pan. Her talent outshines anything else that people want to talk about. Yes, you may see her twerking on Twitter, or scantily clad at an awards show. She may end up trending because a comedian decides if he makes her his punchline, than he might go viral, but the reason why anyone even know who she is, is because she's super talented and a super hard worker

She's a 3x-Grammy Award winner. She's earned well over 6 billion global streams and a platinum selling debut album to date. In 2020, she won the awards for "Best Female R&B/Pop Artist" at the 2020 BET Awards and both "Entertainer of the Year" and "Outstanding Video" at the 2020 NAACP Awards. Her list of high-profile TV performances also include the 2019 American Music Awards, MTV Video Music Awards, BET Awards and Saturday Night Live.

"There were moments that would've completely defeated me when I was younger. Instead, I was able to not just survive, but thrive, she said. "This is the person who I truly want to be. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy ready for the world. I really found my voice. I love it. I love my body. I love talking shit, and it's what I'm doing." Enough said.

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Black College Today is published bimonthly by Black College Today, Inc., P.O. Box 25425, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33320. Third Class postage paid at Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Postmaster: Send change of address to BCT, P.O. Box 25425, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33320. Annual subscriptions \$12.00 plus postage and handling of \$2.00 in the United States only. Foreign subscriptions are not yet available. Back issues \$2.95 plus postage and handling.

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WORKING WHILE GOING TO SCHOOL

By Dr. Felicia Durden



Many of you may find the need to work while going to school. As an Undergrad, I worked part-time my entire college career. This was due to needing money to help support my family and I. Although, it was tough at times, I did enjoy the jobs I had as they helped shape my future career choices. This month I want to share ideas on balancing work and school and not miss a beat.

It is common for students to have jobs while going to school. Typically 70% of students are employed while in college. There are many costs associated with obtaining a college degree. Tuition, books, fees, and parking are a few costs, but you also have to consider housing, food, and clothing. The costs can quickly add up, and taking on a job may be a necessary option. There are many benefits to working while in college.

Some of the benefits include:

1. Money to take care of expenses and extras. Working while in school can decrease the amount taken out on student loans. One of the main reasons students take jobs while in college is to help offset expenses. This offset of expenses can allow you to not take out large sums in student loans, which is a massive problem for many graduates. Remember, the money you get in student loans must be repaid and can take years to complete. I know many students who are still paying loans and it takes a hardship on their living expenses.
2. Provides opportunities to gain work experience that can lead to a job upon graduation. Many students find that the positions they take while in college play a significant part in their future employment upon graduation. Many take jobs in the firms they work in, while others gain valuable skills and work experience that help them land jobs. I know of a student who planned to go into nursing. She took a job as a CNA and soon learned that this was not her cup of tea. She was able to adjust and majored in computers which lead to a very rewarding career.
3. Provides the opportunity to apply your learning from the books in a practical setting. During your college years you

will sit through countless hours of lectures and complete projects based on your chosen field of study. Taking a job in an industry that matches your program of study is a great way to apply your book learning in a real-world setting. Some students find that their employer are impressed with their current knowledge of trends in the field from their studies and lean on college students for expertise. This build purpose and appreciation for college workers.

While there are clear benefits to working while in school, we want to also look at the flip side and think about the downside.

1. Some students complain that they miss out on the “college experience” when working. Due to their work schedule, this can mean missing a few games or time to hang out in the Student Union. Students want to enjoy their college years and the fact is sometimes you will miss out on the fun when working. The key is to talk to your boss and ensure you can schedule in some time for fun and work. Many bosses are good at working around the schedules of college students.
2. Another complaint I have heard is that grades can be impacted negatively due to juggling work and school. This is where time management will be key. Be sure to think about how many hours you will work and how many hours you will need for studying. This balance will require that you manage your time effectively and efficiently.
3. Finally, some complain that working and going to school is very stressful. They are struggling with keeping their grades up and trying to maintain employment. Self-care is imperative. Pay attention to your stress levels and if you need to cut back on hours be willing to do that. Remember your health and happiness matter.

As with any endeavor, working while in college has its pros and cons. The best way to proceed is to list the things that are beneficial and the things that are challenging about the prospect of working while going to school. From there, determine what the best course of action will be for you.

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What does higher learning at an HBCU mean to you? What are you excited about? Are you elated about being a part of a culturally-focused institution? Is it the relatability of your peers who are accessible in the environment all day, every day? Or, what about the sounds and rhythm of the marching band, the routines of the dance squads, the fierce competitive natural of the sports teams, or the rich black poetry during spoken words events. Or, is it the highly intellectual conversations and study groups designed to charge your imagination and catapult you into an unimaginable and successful future as an HBCU graduate?

Track Your WHYs...

Or...is your drive motivated by all of the above and much more?! Below are spaces for you to jot down your WHYs in short for a personal check-in later. While you are experiencing *the life* of an HBCU student, use this exercise to help measure your personal growth at future intervals. At the beginning of each semester or quarter, look back at your list. You just might find along the way that you may want to change some thoughts and things :) For any

changes you make down the road, take detailed notes of the reason (s) why you've chosen to make specific changes. Make your list fun and interesting. Use a journal instead if you're feeling the urge to track much more colorful details (which I do advise :) These lines are just a motivational start!

Original WHYs

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MORGAN SCHOLAR SARAI RANKIN EARNS \$15,000 ASTRONAUT SCHOLARSHIP



Senior Physics Major Is Third Consecutive Morgan ASF Award Recipient

For three consecutive years, Morgan has proudly produced an Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (ASF) award winner. Sarai Rankin, a senior from the School of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences (SCMNS), is among a highly competitive field of 68 students from 45 universities across the nation who were awarded a \$15,000 ASF scholarship for 2022.

The ASF awards the Astronaut Scholarship to exceptional juniors and seniors pursuing a degree in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) with the intent to pursue research or otherwise advance their field upon receipt of their final degree. Rankin, a physics major, was selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants for exhibiting initiative, creativity and excellence within her elected academic course of study. As the University's most recent awardee, she continues a tradition of excellence set by Morgan's previous ASF scholarship recipients Mikayla Harris (in 2021) and Micaela Fleetwood (in 2020).

"I am honored to be inducted as an Astronaut Scholar with the other brilliant minds in my cohort," said Sarai Rankin. "With their support, I will continue my research of deep space objects, and spread enthusiasm for and knowledge of Astronomy within my community. I am beyond grateful for this opportunity!"

The arduous selection process begins with nominations from Morgan professors or faculty members, upon which the awardee will receive a scholarship of up to \$15,000. For Rankin, as well as Morgan's previous Astronaut Scholars, the full \$15,000 amount was awarded. Other benefits include: networking and mentoring opportunities with astronauts, alumni and industry leaders; participation in the Michael Collins Family Professional Development Program; and a paid trip to attend ASF's Innovators Week, which provides an opportunity for the Astronaut Scholars to present their research at a technical conference which takes place during the ASF Innovators Week & Gala taking place August 24-27 in Orland, FL.

"Every year, we are blown away by the dozens of extraordinary undergraduate

students who are dedicated to pursuing STEM to help create a better life here on Earth," said Caroline Schumacher, ASF's president and CEO. "Ultimately, we are fueling the career paths of these students, who are destined to make lasting contributions in their chosen STEM fields and become the game-changers of tomorrow."

As a rising STEM star within the vast ranks of Astronomy, Rankin is charting her path with calculated precision. She spent the recent summer working as an undergraduate student researcher with the Center for Astrophysics, a progressive research partnership between the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and Harvard College Observatory. Before taking on that role, Rankin interned with Johns Hopkins University as a research student at the Cosmology Large Angular Scale Survey.

Congratulations Sarai Rankin on receiving the prestigious Astronaut Scholarship Foundation award! Your faculty and commitment to excellence in pursuit of your passion in STEM are commended. Continue to embody Morgan's Core Values of Leadership, Integrity, Diversity, Excellence and

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Why Use a Training Consultant Instead of Doing It Yourself



PART 2

By Robin Kegler



Respect as you represent the National Treasure on the world stage!

How can a training consultant address the difficult tasks that can keep an organization from delivering an effective training and development program? Part 1 examined the challenges and solutions to cost that businesses and organizations incur for professional development so that leadership and staff have access to the best training and development programs. One way to reduce the cost of developing an in-house training and development program is to hire a training consultant. In addition to cost reduction, a training consultant can also assist with the challenges of time and environment. This article will briefly look at the challenges of time and the environment and solutions a training consultant can bring to organizations.

Background

Time

Training programs that align with a company's goals and objectives takes time to develop. There are different milestones to consider in the design and development of an effective training program. This includes a needs assessment to determine if training is necessary, who the participants are and what is to be covered in a specific period. Furthermore, developing the material, methods, measurements, and evaluations requires a large amount of time. "Most organizations have not had the resources to measure the effectiveness of their training programs" according to Dan Slater, President of RWD Performance Solutions.

Before a learning team can measure the effectiveness of a training program, additional time is needed to write and edit content, consider input from in-house Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), time to design how the program will be delivered, create, and test training tools and include a train-

the-trainer component for the in-house training sessions. Time to test the program with a sample group before rolling it out to the employees at large is also important.

The Environment

The environment plays a role in a company's ability to meet their learning objectives. Some positions require cross training or have skills that are transferable to other positions. For example, data centers do not only hire call center candidates. Many of the positions do not require technological skills. Data center hiring managers employ program managers, data analysts, as well as learning and development experts. Many data center positions do not seem obvious to most candidates. Transferable skills are considered an important asset that can widen the candidate pool and training programs within companies. It can also lead to trainers and facilitators who lack the experience or training to deal with trend changes within an industry, such as the application of transferable skills, or the use of online chat in call centers.

Solutions

Time

Although a needs assessment is valuable during the preparation stage of training, some companies may not have time to complete a thorough one. In this case, training consultants can use prior assessments, conversations, and results from previous tools to evaluate baseline needs and diagnose how the company should proceed. Training consultants can recognize whether training can move forward, be pushed back, or revamped. An evaluation of a bank in Pakistan notes that although training and development benefit employees to improve abilities and increase knowledge, the quality of training needs upgrading. Training consultants take the time to measure outcomes of current training and assess the

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efficiency of a training program to determine the best use of time for all participants. The training consultant is also able to determine where a company needs growth, assists in the planning, and offers train-the-trainer services for learning managers and staff who will take the lead in delivering future trainings on the same topic.

Environment

Historically, training is used during the onboarding process. Everyone receives the same training. However, employees value training and want more development on the job. Forty percent of employees who receive inadequate training leave the job within the first twelve months of being hired. Training is for new hires and existing staff. It is important for all staff to be well trained before new projects move forward. This is to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Changes within industries occur constantly. Keeping up with new methods and regulations can be overwhelming. Hiring a training consultant ensures that best practices are being modeled, and that mandatory training complies and is accurate. In addition to content, training consultants provide packages that include tracking and reporting.

Conclusion

Most companies see the value in developing their employees. Outsourcing training enhances employee development and performance, while ensuring that companies create the right balance between employee development and transfer of learning. In addition to teaching participants in an organization train-the-trainer program, a training consultant can assist organizations to reduce cost, time and environmental challenges that may occur during the development of their own training program.

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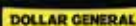
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Dell Scholars Program-dellscholars.org

Siemens Merit Scholarship-siemens-foundation.org

Jack and Jill of America Foundation-jackandjillfoundation.org

Ron Brown Scholarship-ronbrown.org

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National Association of Black Engineers Scholarships-nsbe.org

Coca Cola Scholarship-cocacola-scholars.org

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Xerox Minority Technical Scholarship-Xerox.com

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College Matters Scholarship-collegematters.com

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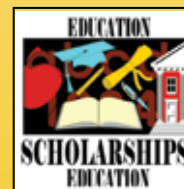
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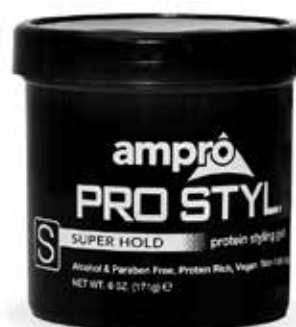
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HEALTH 101:

THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION

“Just like plants need water to survive, we do too.”

by Jessica Miller



In my freshman year of college, I was rushed to the hospital unexpectedly. This happened to me in the middle of the night. I started having symptoms of chills, sweaty hands, and uncontrollable shaking. After being in the hospital for five hours, I was diagnosed with an acute kidney infection and was severely dehydrated. I knew right then I had to do better with my water intake and overall diet. This moved me to deeper my knowledge of holistic health and preventing chronic illnesses.

The human body needs water to survive. Every organ and cell needs to stay hydrated in order for the body to function at its best. Up to 60% of the adult body is made up of water. It is used as the base building material in cells and performs a number of other benefits within our bodies. Age, weight, and gender determine the amount of water you need during the day; athletes may need to drink more water because they lose more fluids during physical activities.

How to Determine When You Need More Water?

One way to determine if you need to drink more water is to check the color of your urine. The darker your urine is, the more water you need to drink. You are well hydrated if your urine is light or has no color. Other signs of dehydration include fatigue, dry mouth, headache, and dizziness.

Why Stay Hydrated?

The importance of hydration is essential not only for physical health but for mental health as well. There is an extensive list of benefits to drinking plenty of water, here are some of the most discussed topics.

- Increase in Energy and Improved Productivity – Dehydration can cause fatigue and significantly reduce brain function. If you're feeling like your cognitive skills aren't at their usual speed, it may be time to grab some water.
- Improved Physical Performance – Physical activity causes your body to lose a lot of fluids. Staying hydrated before, during, and after exercise can make your workout feel better. Water can keep your performance up while exercising and prevent fatigue after.
- Weight Loss – Often times when you feel hungry, it may be because your body simply needs water. Drinking water will not satisfy hunger. It is a way to control the calories consumed day to day. The next time you feel hungry, try drinking water first and it may surprise you.
- Mood Booster – When your body is hydrated, it's performing its best which helps put you in a good mood. If you notice yourself slipping into a negative mood, drinking water can help.
- Headache Prevention – Headaches are often due to dehydration and can be relieved by drinking water. It's essential to stay hydrated to avoid headaches and migraines, particularly if you are prone to getting them.

Some people struggle to drink water because they don't like the taste. Drinking something that tastes like nothing can get boring. There are ways to improve water such as adding fruit, lemon is common, cucumber, or mint. Try spicing things up to stay hydrated!



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JSU ALUM JONAS ADAMS NAMED DIRECTOR AT NPR, CREDITS THE POWER OF NETWORKING

by Anthony Howard
Jackson State University

Jackson State University alumnus Jonas Adams was recently appointed director of National Public Radio's (NPR) flagship show "All Things Considered." Adams describes the promotion as one of the most rewarding roles he's had in his career.

"It's a job I really never saw myself doing. I've been in radio for 20 years, so when I got this position, it was a huge sigh of relief," said Adams. "It was a huge relief to know I finally settled in a position that utilizes all of my skills."

"All Things Considered" is a weekday show led by five hosts presenting breaking news from throughout the globe and offering a combination of commentaries, analysis, interviews and features. NPR is a non-profit organization with a national reach.

Adams is responsible for making sure that behind-the-scenes production is seamless. "When you tune in, every element of the show you hear is controlled and cued by me," he explains. "I'm also the person that curates the sound of the show. All music is selected and approved by me. I also pitch and edit news pieces as well."

When Adams and his family relocated to Washington D.C. from Jackson, Mississippi, he said the relationships he built at JSU played a major role in

helping him find opportunities in a new city.

"Everywhere I go, I'm good. I did well up here [D.C.] because of JSU alumni, in particular Robert Carter," explains Adams, referring to his friend and fellow alum who is a producer for NPR's popular entertainment concert series "Tiny Desk"

"When I first moved up here, I had nothing as far as employment. My wife had the job. He was one of the first people I called, and he put me in a position where I could get gigs and introduced me to promoters so that I could put some money in my pocket."

Adams believes building strong networks in college is equally important as earning a degree. Carter commends Adams for his ambition.

"His years-long grind to get to NPR paid off instantly because he refused to become content," Carter said of Adams. "He's done it his way and didn't let anything discourage him. I have a tremendous amount of respect for that man."

Adams' career in radio began while he



JSU alumnus Jonas Adams was appointed director of NPR's "All Things Considered." (Photo special to JSU)

was a student at JSU. He worked as a volunteer for WJSU, the campus radio station. Soon he would become an intern under Program Director Bobbie Walker Trussel, where he learned most of the skills he still uses today.

"She's the one that trained me on everything that is radio as far as being on air and everything behind the scenes," recalls Adams.

After graduation, Adams was hired at WJSU as the music director and an on-air personality. He quickly began making strides by creating the segment "JAZZMATIC MORNINGS," which presently still airs.

Following his time at WJSU, Adams began working at WOAD, a local gospel radio station.

"That was also courtesy of Bobbie Walker [Trussel]. She linked me with Percy Davis. He is the one who hired me at the gospel station, which is in the

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Robert Carter



Jonas Adams says his JSU connections help him land his newest professional opportunity. (Photo special to JSU)

same building as 99 Jams and Kixie 107,” shared Adams. “From there, I was working at all those stations simultaneously at one point.”

Adams was also well-known in Jackson as a local disk jockey who went by DJ Jonasty, spinning at spots like Freelon’s Restaurant Bar & Groove and local radio stations.

IMG_7641

Jonas Adams says his JSU connections help him land his newest professional opportunity. (Photo special to JSU)

Approaching a nearly 15-year long stint in urban radio broadcasting, Adams began a career as an executive producer for Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) as an executive producer for live on-air talk shows. For over five years, he produced four different shows a week: “The Gestalt Gardener,” “Creature Comforts,” “Fix it 101,” and “Deep South Dining.”

As time passed, Adams and his wife, Eboni, decided it was time to take their careers to the next level.

“I kind of hit a glass ceiling in radio. MPB was probably my best job at that

point, but the positions ahead of me, those people weren’t going anywhere, which is fine,” explains Adams. “I wasn’t going anywhere at 99 Jams. So, I talked to my wife, and she said she was ready to submit our resumes across the country.”

Once Adams and his family relocated to D.C., he began working as a freelance audio editor at Westwood One media company. He worked his way through the ranks and, in less than two years, was promoted to executive producer -a top position in the company. Unfortunately, Adams’ progression then came to an unforeseen halt.

“The pandemic hit, and they laid off the whole company. I went right back to scratch,” he said.

During the pandemic, Adams spent over a year – applying for another opportunity before getting hired at NPR as a temporary employee. Six months later, Adams was offered the full-time director’s position at the nonprofit media organization with a national audience.

The former radio personality never envisioned himself working in the

news industry. After months on the job, Adams said he enjoys the new career and is thankful he was open-minded about the decision.

“If you would’ve asked younger Jonas, I would have never gone into the news lane. I thought I was going to work in more of the entertainment side of radio, programming music, DJing live on-air, being a personality,” Adams shares. “Now that I’m older, this is a lane I really enjoy. I’m glad I wasn’t too close-minded because I probably would have never applied. I’m here for the long run.”

Adams encourages everyone to keep their options open and not stray away from new opportunities. He said sometimes a person might have to toss out their original plan to make room for something greater.

“Know that you’re good enough. Don’t let anyone tell you that your HBCU degree is not going to open enough doors for you or prepare you for the real world,” Adams says. “You are more than good enough. As a matter of fact, you’re probably going to leave your HBCU overqualified.”

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SAIC DONATES \$100K TO FUND ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIPS

Mashego



Science Applications International Corp. (NYSE: SAIC) recently announced the company's 2022 \$100,000 donation in partnership with Alabama A&M University. This year's scholarship will finance the education of two incoming freshmen pursuing a career in the historically Black university's College of Engineering, Technology and Physical Sciences.

"These students are the technology leaders of tomorrow, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to provide support and guidance for them," said Greg Fortier, vice president of the Army Fires, Aviation and Missile Defense Operation at SAIC. "SAIC partners with reputable universities such as Alabama A&M, who are responsible for helping our future scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians reach their full potential and enable STEM transformation critical to our society's success and well-being."

This is the first year SAIC has worked alongside Alabama A&M to provide opportunities for passionate and driven students to pursue opportunities through the College of Engineering, Technology and Physical Sciences (CETPS) and the AAMU-RISE Foundation, which facilitates research and development efforts with the school, industry and government partners.

"Our relationship with SAIC has provided opportunities for our students to explore comprehensive, rewarding academic experiences, regardless of their financial circumstances," said Dr. Zhengtao Deng, interim dean of Alabama A&M's College of Engineering, Technology and Physical Sciences. "We look forward to augmenting our collaboration to educate and equip future innovators, encouraging the continued success of the school's programs."

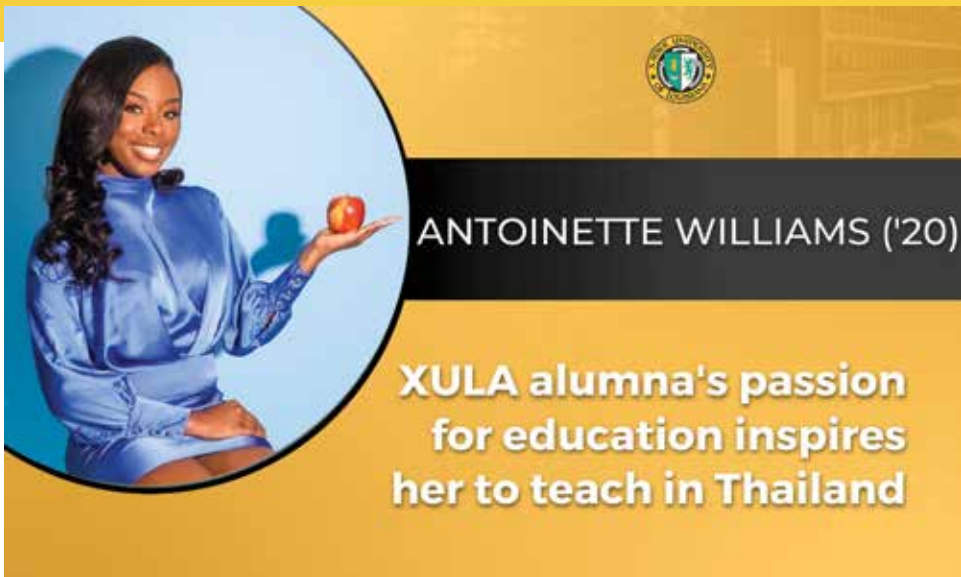
One of this year's scholarship recipients, Lebo Mashego, began AAMU this fall. Mashego, who was inspired to apply for the SAIC STEM Scholarship by his sister, an AAMU alumna, plans to study mechanical engineering. AAMU will select a second scholarship recipient.

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Driven by her passion for educating others, Xavier University of Louisiana alumna Antoinette Williams' ('20) devotion and skills have led her to Thailand, where she will teach high school English. Her Thailand teaching opportunity came after applying to the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), a non-profit organization that offers participants study abroad opportunities to foster their global and intercultural understanding.

While at Xavier, she participated in Xavier's Center for Intercultural and International Programs (CIIP) and was blessed with the opportunity to study abroad in London. A political science major and education minor, Williams completed classroom hours as a student teacher and is excited to use her knowledge to develop the minds of Thailand students.

"I've always been interested in the way education works not only in the United States but in other countries, so to be able to participate in this process is a dream come true," said Williams.

Williams vividly remembers sixth grade as the pivotal year that piqued her interest in education. After being placed in advanced placement (AP) classes, she began recognizing the lack of diversity in her classroom. An Uptown

New Orleans native, she noticed she never had classes with any children from her neighborhood, although they all attended the same school. This continued until her sophomore year of high school, with Williams continuing to only have classes with her same sixth-grade group, even for elective courses. This separation also created tension for her outside of school hours. It was difficult for Williams to foster social connections with her neighborhood friends as they often told her to hang out with her school friends.

"Even as a kid, I was trying to figure out who decided which classrooms each person should be in," said Williams. "I knew I wanted to be the person who helped fix rules, laws, and policies that shape those types of experiences, so I chose to major in political science. I also chose an education minor to become more familiar with what actually happens in the classroom."

While Williams' childhood experience motivated her to pursue education, Xavier forged the pathway. The guidance of Dr. Pamela Waldron-Moore, a Professor in Xavier's Political Science department, steered Williams in the direction of education and policy.

"As a first-generation college student, I didn't know there were Master's policy programs. I accredit my trajectory post-

Xavier to Dr. Waldron-Moore because she introduced me to education policy programs and helped me realize the career I really wanted to do," said Williams.

Her Xavier experience was fulfilling, and she is grateful to Xavier's Political Science department for playing a vital role in her life.

"Shoutout to our department; it's small but mighty. My Xavier professors helped me with so much. We were a smaller department, so whenever opportunities presented themselves, our professors knew who we were and could say, 'I think that's something Antoinette would be great for,' said Williams. "I can't tell you how many times I've wondered if I should participate in an opportunity and Dr. Waldron-Moore always lent a listening ear."

Williams' first post-graduation job was due to a recommendation from Dr. Russell Frazier, Department Head of Xavier's Political Science department. Dr. Frazier sent Williams' resume for the job, and she received the position shortly after. The position allowed Williams to work for a council member and chief of staff and provided her with extensive judicial and legislative experience.



“This was after graduation and at this point, my professors were not obligated to help me, yet they still were. The political science department was not only helpful during my undergraduate experience, but still are to this day,” said Williams.

Xavier’s Education department also played a significant role in Williams’ experience by ensuring she was ready for life once she left campus.

“Dr. Jimmy Caldwell and Dr. Rachel Davis-Haley in the education department were my rocks. They prepare students for life after Xavier, whether it be graduate school or the workforce. I’m truly thankful to them for that because I’ve been successful because of my preparation at Xavier,” expressed Williams.



After Xavier, Williams obtained her master’s degree in Education Policy from the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn), where she studied education policy. She graduated early from the Ivy League institution utilizing the work ethic and dedication she cultivated her entire academic career. Williams’ two graduate school roommates were also Xavier alums, aiding in her transition

to graduate school. She rose to UPenn’s workload challenges in part to her college preparation. She found many topics covered in graduate school she had already learned during her Xavier sophomore year. With her in-depth knowledge from Xavier, she felt at ease academically.

“Xavier prepared me more than some of my counterparts in my graduate program who went to illustrious universities. My degree from Xavier made my ivy league education a piece of cake,” said Williams.

In addition to academia, Williams’ volunteering experience will also support her teaching abroad in Thailand. She volunteered with the United Teachers of New Orleans teacher’s union, setting the groundwork for her advocacy in support of teachers and students. She is a board member for Trinity Community Center, a local non-profit organization that serves as an education hub to foster lifelong learning for under-resourced children, youth, and families. She’s also an active member and former vice president of McDonough 35 High School’s alumni association.

She participated in Mobilization at Xavier (M.A.X.), a coalition of students who desire to promote social awareness and social responsibility through community service. She also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and participated in multiple community engagement projects with her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA). Williams’ dedication to community involvement stems from understanding the positive outcomes of volunteering.

“Volunteer work has a larger impact on people than we realize. It instills in you that whenever you’re doing great things for yourself, you should remember, ‘for every two steps I take, I should reach and pull someone else up,’” said Williams. “That mentality keeps good people around you and keeps

opportunities coming towards you. It’s a great feeling when you’re in a position to give back because not everybody is able to.”



Williams currently works as a fellow for Education Testing Services (ETS), assembling policy recommendations for projects. She recently presented a policy proposal at the National Assessment of Educational Progress’ (NAEP) 10th Anniversary Internship Symposium, representing the political science methodology she learned from Xavier. She submitted policy recommendations on how to mitigate COVID-19’s impact on NAEP’s federal and state policies.

She looks forward to Thailand as the classroom experience will allow her to witness the impact of education in real-time. After Thailand, she plans to return to the U.S. to obtain her Ph.D. in literacy language and culture or education policy. Thanks to her experience working alongside council members, school board members, and state senators, she is determined and encouraged to continue policy work to make a difference in communities.

Williams is thankful to Xavier for shaping her career path and instilling the skills she needed to be successful. Her perseverance, drive and commitment to education and policy drives her forward as she works to create the best practices for legislative and educational systems.

WSSU Powerhouse Red and White Cheerleaders featured in Ciara's video for JUMP

Gabrielle Brown

Ciara broke the Twittersphere when she posted a video of her and her dancers on top of a Ford Bronco to preview her new song “JUMP.” She’s followed up with intensity, releasing a stunning new visual for the single, which dropped July 8, that features the WSSU Powerhouse of Red and White Cheerleaders.

On an early spring morning, nine cheerleaders and their coaches, NeSheila Washington and Tevin Allen, arrived at the set in Los Angeles, California. It didn’t look that way at first. “When the sun came up, it looked like we were in New York City,” Washington said. With some Hollywood magic, the set transformed, and the team was whisked away to hair and make-up to prepare for the day. “They had a different crew member assigned to each cheerleader. Seeing crew members swoop in throughout the day to touch up make-up or provide little water bottles with straws was so cool. It made me feel like a proud mom watching all of this happen,”



WSSU Powerhouse of Red and White.

Washington said.

The trip to California was all business, but the team says Ciara’s dancers made them feel like family. For Dance Captain Destiny Martin and Team Captain William Johnson, the trip was more than they could ever dream. Martin said “my background is in dance, not cheer. Seeing all the dancers that I’ve been watching on Instagram since middle school was incredible. Being in the studio with these dancers was amazing. It was also great to see that these professional dancers started exactly where we are and now have successful careers.”

Red Team captain Johnson said “Being there was very inspiring. I’ve wanted to be a backup dancer since I was very young. I come from a small town, so the dance programs there were not great. Being so busy and focusing on

my schoolwork at WSSU made me feel that I may never achieve my dream of being a professional backup dancer. This trip and the experience working with Ciara made me see that achieving my dream is really possible.”

Like most interactions in this day and age, this opportunity blossomed with the help of social media. One of Ciara’s dancers saw the team online and knew that they would be an excellent fit for the song. Washington said when the team arrived on the set, she could see that the dancers had done their homework.

“Ciara’s team was fantastic. The thing that impressed me most is that they had watched our videos on Instagram and TikTok and were very familiar with our moves. They even knew each of the cheerleaders’ names and the positions that they usually held during



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WSSU Cheer getting hair styled on set.



WSSU cheer on set with hair and makeup.

Powerhouse routines,” Washington said. Johnson said, “This made for a magical collaboration. Ciara and her team didn’t treat us like cheerleaders; they treated us as a full part of the project.” Martin says the team exchanged dance moves with Ciara’s dancers, creating a showstopping routine worthy of any viral TikTok Challenge. “Ciara and Jamaica kept pulling me over to watch the dancing and the playbacks. They were giving me too much power in Hollywood, and I loved it!” Washington said.

This is not the first time social media has put the WSSU Powerhouse of Red and White in the national spotlight. Video of their natural curls, dynamic steps, and it-girl/it-guy confidence has landed the team on “The Real” and Martin with her own deal with Champion. In a world where many young people are focused on filters, influence, and lives where people live as caricatures of themselves, Washington says it’s incredible that the team is getting their due recognition for being authentic.

The best part is these young show-stoppers are learning tangible skills they can use once they graduate. Creating a strong presence on social media has given the team opportunities to learn about marketing, tech, and graphics. “They are bringing many skills to

the table and learning so much,” Washington said.

While going to Los Angeles to showcase their talents was undoubtedly a whirlwind experience, the student-athletes remained focused on their primary goal, school. “We went to LA during finals week.” Cheerleader Tiffany Jacobs said, “I woke up at 5 a.m. to take a final exam. Waking up early, being on set all day, and still being able to do a great job with my coursework made me feel like anything is possible. We did one of our finals in an Uber on the way to the beach. We always have to make sure to plan and to have school be our number one priority.”

The team says the experience motivated them to trust the process and fine-tune their skills, both in and out of the classroom. Johnson said, “This whole experience taught me about being a better leader. I’m upping my game even more. This year I set impossible goals for myself and reached them. I just want to keep elevating and improving.”

Washington said, “I left coaching to raise my family and then returned to the field. I’ve learned that we all need to trust that we are capable and that we should embrace new opportunities,” Washington emphasized, “This is just the beginning of these relationships



and opportunities.” The coach has big dreams for the team, “I want Powerhouse to appear on awards shows. Or maybe have their own reality show. This has shown me that there is no ceiling to what they can do.”

The high-energy track features hip-hop group Coast Contra and is sure to be the song of the summer. Still, the team says this experience will stay with them beyond the warm weather season. “Seeing the whole thing come to life. It was amazing to be there really doing this, creating, and seeing our work materialize. We really bonded on this trip,” Martin said. Johnson said, “This opportunity showed me that I could really be successful. It opened my eyes that a career in dance is something that I can truly pursue. It’s right there for us. We just need to keep going.”

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WHAT'S HOT ON THE NET!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! WELCOME BACK TO BCT'S WHAT'S HOT ON THE NET!!! WE'RE BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS ON CELEBRITIES ACROSS THE WORLD SO LET'S GET INTO IT!!!

With the **NBA** season set to tip off soon, we had to give you some NBA news!!! NBA legend **Carmelo Anthony** is set to release a four part series titled Seven about his life. Seven will showcase Carmelo's life from childhood to present. Carmelo's **Creative 7** company is working with **Westbrook** productions to produce the documentary. Westbrook is **Will Smith and Jada Pinkett's** production company. With this much talent and a great story, we can't wait to watch Seven!

Lil Baby recently gave **Philadelphia 76ers' NBA star James Harden** a birthday gift to remember. During his birthday party celebration in California, Lil Baby handed Harden a bag with \$250,000 cash in it!!! Lil Baby went on to say that he did not have time to get James an actual gift. Sheesh!!!

Be sure to check out Bromates! The **Snoop Dogg** produced movie will be

released through VOD on October 7 as well as in 100 different movie theaters across the country! Bromates stars **Snoop Dogg, Lil Rel Howery, Jessica Lowe and Josh Brener**. Congrats to Snoop for getting his movie produced and on the big screen!

Congrats to **Karen Civil** for recently being named **General Manager/ EVP of Young Money!!!** Karen has been in the industry for a long time and has paid her dues! You love to see it! We're looking forward to see what's next from Young Money!

Shoutout to **DDG** and **Halle Bailey** who are doing their thing! DDG's newest video for the hit song, "**If I Want You**" stars his real-life girlfriend Halle. The video is fire so check it out if you haven't already.

DDG has been putting together a string of hits and great projects. We know he has more heat around the corner. Halle continues to showcase her talents as a

singer and actress. We can't get enough of Halle and we know she's cooking up something amazing for her fans!

Travis Scott is continuing to put the final touches on his next album. He was recently seen in the studio with **Pharrell**. The two have worked together and given us some great music! Pharrell was on Rodeo and Astroworld. Looking to keep the streak alive, we hope another Travis and Pharrell collab makes the cut on Utopia!

As far as new music goes, here's what we're listening to!

Beyonce – Renaissance

Chris Brown – Breezy

DJ Khaled – God Is

Megan Thee Stallion - Traumazine

Rod Wave – Beautiful Mind

Tink – Pillow Talk

THAT'S IT FOR THIS EDITION OF WHAT'S HOT ON THE NET!!! BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MORE CELEBRITY NEWS NEXT TIME IN BCT!!!

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